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screen

Kristin Thompson, David Bordwell, Edward Branigan:
Space and Narrative in the films of Ozu

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Weekend School on Realism and the Cinema
October 8-10, 1976

Screen has discussed a variety of conceptions of realism in the last few years: in relation to traditional critical notions of a realist cinema; in relation to documentary; and, more recently, in relation to Brecht's critique both of traditional realism and modernist ' anti-realism '. The Weekend School has been organised by the Board of *Screen* to explore some of these conceptions. Papers will be presented by Stephen Heath, Colin MacCabe and Raymond Williams, and films screened will include *American Graffiti, The Big Flame* and *Death by Hanging.* The school will be held in London and will be non-residential. Application forms and full details can be obtained from SEFT, 29 Old Compton Street, London W1V 5PL – tel 01-734 5455/3211. Please apply early as there are a limited number of places available.

The fourth of SEFT's 1976 Weekend Schools will take place in London in December, on the topic Film-Making and the Independent/Avant-Garde Cinema. Further details will be available soon.

SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION IN FILM AND TELEVISION

Editorial

Four members have resigned from the Editorial Board of *Screen*. They state the reasons for this resignation elsewhere in these pages, and that Statement and the Reply to it by the Board speak for themselves. Since those resignations, six more members have been invited to join the Board: Richard Dyer, John Ellis, Christine Geraghty, Annette Kuhn, Steve Neale and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith.

As I say, the Statement and Reply speak for themselves. However, one point of contention is especially directly relevant to two of the articles in this number of *Screen*: ' Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu ' by Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, and ' The Space of *Equinox Flower* ' by Edward Branigan. The Statement criticises *Screen* for rejecting classical cinema, exemplified by Hollywood, in favour of an avant-garde position. Thompson, Bordwell and Branigan in their articles describe the interaction of space and narrative in Ozu's films by contrasting it with a schematic account of Hollywood practice, which they call the ' classical paradigm ', and conclude that Ozu was a crucial ' modernist ' filmmaker. Thus the articles might be read to confirm the Statement's authors' account of the current *Screen* position. But such a reading would be an ill-willed one.

In arguing this, it is important to emphasise the variety of purposes for which such a ' model ' of the classical cinema can be constructed, and the variety of theoretical tasks which fall within the range of *Screen*'s overall project. Roger Silverstone's article in this number considers several theoretical accounts of narrative in relation to a ' quality ' television series in order to see whether they provide a formalism adequate to a message apparently very different from their original object, fairy-tales and myths. The result, both insofar as a successful fit is obtained and in so far as it is not, provides a tool for further investigation of a form *within* the mainstream of film and television. Another use of the model was exemplified by Stephen Heath's analysis of *Touch of Evil* (v 16 nn 1 and 2, Spring-Summer 1975). Here the aim is not to show whether *Touch of Evil* ' fits ' the model, but the strains involved in

6   the construction of a single film text in a field of signifying prac-
tice dominated by that model, the analysis of the text thus bringing
out the characteristics of the model, as well as its contradictions.

The articles in this number by Thompson, Bordwell and Branigan
use the model in yet another way. Here the aim is to provide a
schema against which to set a different practice, that of the
Japanese film-maker Ozu Yasujiro. What the contrast reveals is a
different system of representation of fictional space in Ozu's films,
and correspondingly a different relation between filmic space and
narrative, one in which space is much less subordinate to the
actions which take place within it than it is in the classical model.
It is this looser relationship that is exploited at intervals in Ozu's
films to promote space to a position of aesthetic dominance, and
this exposure of pure filmic space Thompson, Bordwell and Brani-
gan take as the mark of Ozu's ' modernism ', as an example of the
' exposure of the device ' singled out by the Russian formalists
as one of the characteristics of the art of the historical avant-
gardes.

However, this does not make Ozu an avant-garde artist. His
work clearly does not come from an avant-garde movement. All
but three of his films were made for Shochiku, one of the Japanese
majors and a specialist in ' women's pictures '. The three exceptions
were made late in his career for three other majors (Shintoho, Daiei
and Toho) over and above his contractual obligations to Shochiku.
All of them would have been block- and probably blind-booked
into theatres which, while usually independently owned, had exclu-
sive contracts with one production company only. Ozu's films
enjoyed considerable prestige in the Japanese industry, winning
many prizes, but as part of the mainstream product. And on the
other hand, this type of ' exposure of the device ' is by no means
confined to avant-garde art. Ozu himself expressed concern that
his work might fall victim to an all too portentous criticism in the
West, a prophesy amply fulfilled by Schrader's writing. Many of the
moments singled out by Thompson, Bordwell and Branigan are
jokes (notably the photographers sequence in *The Record of a
Tenement Gentleman*), and others (eg the baseball-game transition
in *An Autumn Afternoon*) recall the ' juggling pleasure ' discussed
by Alan Lovell in relation to *If . . .* (v 16 n 4, pp 69-70), but
characteristic in many of the commercial arts. What is remarkable
about Ozu's films, in the terms proposed by Thompson, Bordwell
and Branigan, is that these suspensions are manifested in the area
of the representation of space rather than in relation to genre or
plot. This is because of the different relations established between
space and narrative in the ' Ozu system ' overall – different systems
offer different opportunities for play.

More problematic is the evaluation of these examples of play,
whether found in the avant-garde, in the art film or in the popular
movie. The quotation from Jonathan Culler that Thompson and

Bordwell give (p 71) may easily lead (as it does in Culler's own 7 work – see *Screen* v 17 n 1, pp 102-9) to a celebration of the self-cultivation of the aesthetically aware individual spectator, whether at the London Film Co-op, the Academy Cinema, or the local Odeon. It is rather the contradictions this kind of play can induce vis-à-vis the social relations of the various audiences that *Screen* sees as its dominant theoretical concern and hence also standard of evaluation.

<div align="right">BEN BREWSTER.</div>

Roger Silverstone, formerly researcher for the BBC and ITV, is now engaged in an extensive study of the TV serial. Kristin Thompson is engaged in film research at Madison, Wisconsin, and has published in the Velvet Light Trap. *David Bordwell teaches film at Madison and has published an article on Eisenstein in* Screen *v 15 n 4. Edward Branigan researches film at Madison and has published an article on the point of view shot in* Screen *v 16 n 3.*

Errata

The following errors occurred in the translations of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's scenarios in *Screen* v 17 n 1, Spring 1976:
p 64, lines 19-21 should read ' Pompey, like others, was always preceded by lictors, men with sealed envelopes ' and not as given;
p 74, line 14 should read ' the most violent ' and not ' the most powerful ';
p 80, lines 18-19 should read ' form of feeling ' and not ' form or feeling '.

Readers' Meeting

In May, *Screen* organised an open meeting at which readers could meet the Editorial Board and contributors to v 17 n 1. In pursuit of the same aim of increasing the flow of information from readers to the editors, the Editorial Board now invites its readers to a meeting to discuss the articles in this number with the Board and authors. The meeting will take place on Saturday, September 18 at 11.00 am in the offices of SEFT at 29 Old Compton Street, London W1.

Edinburgh 1976

Pursuing its policy of furthering rather than reflecting developments in film culture, the *Edinburgh Film Festival 1976* is organising two special events in conjunction with its regular presentation of new films.

Psychoanalysis and the Cinema (August 23-28)

This event aims to explore systematically through daily presentations, general and group discussions, some of the problems raised by the encounter between film criticism and recent developments in psychoanalysis. The main subjects for discussion will be: fetishism, ideology, feminism, pleasure, narrative and the relationship between the viewer and the spectacle. Speakers will include: Ros Coward, Stephen Heath, Claire Johnston, Laura Mulvey, Jacqueline Rose, Paul Willemen, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith.

International Forum on Avant-Garde Film (Aug 30-Sept 3)

The aim of the forum is to bring together film-makers, film theorists and film viewers to discuss differing approaches and positions within a common area. Each day there will be a programme of two screenings and a discussion session to which both the audience and an invited panel will contribute. Topics for discussion will be ' The Concept of the Avant-Garde ', ' The Soviet Avant-Garde of the 1920's ', ' The Avant-Garde and Narrative ', ' The Avant-Garde and Film Language ' and ' The Avant-Garde and Politics '. Among the participants will be: Chantal Akerman, Raymond Bellour, Hartmut Bitomsky, Ben Brewster, Noel Burch, Regina Cornwell, Simon Field, Hollis Frampton, Peter Gidal, Birgit and Wilhelm Hein, Marc Karlin, Malcolm Le Grice, Annette Michelson, Anthony McCall, Yvonne Rainer, Paul Sharits, Michael Snow and Peter Wollen. Recent work by film-maker participants will be screened during the festival, although the forum programme itself will only contain films by non-participants to provide background and a field of reference.

Edinburgh 1976 Magazine

A new annual publication which seeks to provide, as did the Festival's former series of auteur publications, critical and theoretical work to accompany the events of the Festival as well as the Festival's practice in general. The 1976 issue will include:
Psychoanalysis and the Cinema: the papers of the psychoanalysis event, Kari Hanet on Raymond Bellour's analysis of *North by Northwest;* Metz on Voyeurism.
The Avant-Garde: Peter Wollen on the Avant-Gardes; Julia Kristeva on textual practice.

To Attend

Each Event has a subscription fee of £8 or $20 (students £5/$15). The fee includes access to event films, participation in seminars and a copy of the magazine. The magazine is also available separately at £1.50/$7 including airmail postage.

There is no special reduction for people wishing to subscribe to both events. *Only a limited number of places are available —*
Please apply promptly.

To: Edinburgh Film Festival Council
3 Randolph Crescent
Edinburgh EH3 7TJ   tel (031) 225 1671

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An Approach to the Structural Analysis
of the Television Message

Roger Silverstone

Introduction

This paper* is a first attempt at an analysis of the television
message based on research in progress. Much of it will be, in some
degree or another, incomplete. The main concern has been to
extract from a mass of data and partial theory a skeletal present-
ation which goes some way to indicate the direction and preoccu-
pation of the·research as a whole.

A number of introductory points might be made, above all with
regard to the assumptions underlying the research.

It is reasonable to assume that television is in some way central
in and for contemporary culture. Its ubiquity as a means of com-
munication suggests that it will articulate the central concerns,
the central values and the central aesthetic of the culture, central
both in that they are dominant and also in that, at least minimally,
they are widely accepted. Television transmits what we know in
ways that we understand and even if the content of the message
is new it is presented in a form that makes it acceptable. None
of this is particularly surprising and the generally reinforcive
function of television is widely recognised.

In this, its cultural centrality, television defines the boundaries
of common sense from within; it is neither a specialised, nor an
avant-garde nor a sub-cultural medium. It does not, except within
a very restricted sense, innovate. To what extent this is due to
television's technology, in other words to the dependence of the
technique and aesthetic of video on that of film, or to what extent

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* This article was originally presented to a SEFT weekend school on
the television series, and although it has been slightly revised since
then for publication in *Screen*, it remains a working paper, and since
work continues it is by no means a final statement.

it is due to political and economic realities remains to be seen.

However in stressing this centrality, the complexity of television, both the intrinsic complexity of the message, how it says what it says, and that of television's functioning as an institution, should not be minimised. In particular the message, transmitted both in sound and in picture, poses great problems for analysis. It would seem that in television, at least in the Anglo-American tradition, the verbal message dominates the visual. Again, whether this is technologically necessary, or, as seems more likely, reflects a continuing cultural bias, remains a moot point. Nevertheless it can be argued that the significance of the narrative, a significance which prompts much of the analysis to follow, owes its maintenance to the continuing domination in our culture of the word.

The concern in the research as a whole, then, is to break open the television message in an attempt both to understand how it is constructed and to see to what extent one can identify culturally specific and culturally non-specific elements. In identifying the former it will be necessary to relate them to the society which produced them. In identifying the latter it will be necessary to establish a basic constancy underlying the messages of any particular culture but above all between cultures; a base which both defines a certain anthropological unity and from which the diversity can be, in qualitative terms, measured.

Structuralism, as one method and in so far as it is one method, recognises this distinction and offers ways of approaching it. It is primarily concerned with identifying the order within culture, with understanding the logic (or logics) according to which it is organised, and it takes as its point of reference the text.

In this paper the methods of Metz, Propp and Greimas have been used in an attempt to open out the text of the television message. To a large extent this has involved the study of its narrative structure, identified in different ways in the work of Metz and of Propp, and developed in that of Greimas away from a chronological and predominantly functional analysis to a logical and structural one in which the problems of the creation of meaning are more clearly posed. However this paper clearly stops short with the presentation of a more or less empty syntactic structure and how fully this can be filled remains to be seen. It does, at this stage, seem possible to make some progress in defining a lexicon and hence in identifying how the narrative structure creates and transforms its meanings. Should this prove to be so it is clear that only a fraction of the richness of the text will be revealed. However the aim is not that, but to provide the key to the understanding of on what that richness depends.

Selection of the Text
The set of programmes chosen for analysis was the series *Intimate*

Strangers, produced by Richard Bates for London Weekend Tele-
vision and broadcast in thirteen weekly episodes between Septem-
ber 20 and December 13, 1974. They were shown at 9.00 pm
on Friday evenings.

A certain number of more or less intuitive considerations led
to the choice of this series. Firstly it was felt that in general the
television drama, and in particular the series, had been inade-
quately treated in the literature. The relative predominance of
such programmes in the schedules emphasised the lack. Secondly
it was felt that a contemporary drama (contemporary both in time
of writing and in subject) would pose fewest problems given the
nature of the analysis. Thirdly, and for similar reasons, it seemed
reasonable to choose a series of plays that was written specifically
for television and also contained both complete serial and complete
episode narratives. Fourthly, in order to avoid, albeit rather
imperfectly, the problems associated with authorship one was look-
ing for a series that was written and/or directed by more than one
individual.

Intimate Strangers fulfilled all of these criteria. It was contem-
porary, in both senses, and written especially for television. Each
episode was more or less narratively complete and the series as a
whole was narratively coherent. Finally, in addition to the normal
group involvement in the production of a television series (camera/
sound crews, make-up, set designers, props etc), there were four
directors, four writers and a producer involved in its creation.

The programmes were recorded off-air on to video-tape. The
copies used for this analysis were unfortunately in black-and-white.

The Series: Plot
Harry Paynter, married to Joan for nearly thirty years, father of
two grown-up daughters, production manager for a publishing
firm and owner of a house and garden in Tunbridge Wells and
a vintage Bentley, has a heart attack. As a result, and despite an
effort to provide him with what amounts to a sinecure at his old
place of work, he finds himself jobless. In quick succession,
and episode by episode, he fails in his holiday with Joan, fails
to take advantage of a business opportunity, fails to consummate
a relationship with a younger woman and, finally, fails in his new
job. However, faced with the possibility of a final failure in his
marriage, together with Joan Harry plans a new life. He sells their
house, Joan's garden and his Bentley and they buy a small book-
shop with a flat above. He is enthusiastic and very busy; she is
neither. Their relationship becomes increasingly estranged and
Joan finds herself, during a shopping trip to London, in bed with
an old friend. Nevertheless, she is the one who makes the effort
to repair the damage and, after a session with her doctor, seems
to pull herself and her marriage together. She succeeds and in

the last four episodes the two of them react jointly to the world around them: to their past and their memories, to the problems presented by their married but unhappily pregnant daughter, to the offer of a new and exciting job in Harry's old firm – an offer which Harry declines – and finally to their other daughter's romance with an old adversary of Harry's and to the prospect of a new house and a reinvigoration of their life together.

The series as a whole has been analysed as one narrative, but only in so far as it directly concerns what follows will this be discussed.

The Episode

The episode chosen for a full discussion in this paper is *Episode Six*. It is perhaps the most dramatic of the thirteen, but more importantly it is the pivotal episode of the series, the one in which Harry is at his lowest and in which he begins the long climb up. It will be argued that in this episode one narrative is completed and another begun and that this is true both of the episode and of the series. There is a clear, and in a sense overdetermined division which reveals more adequately than in any other single episode the significant features of the narrative as a whole. Since in this episode the two narratives coincide, any problems in their clash which do appear from time to time elsewhere in the series are kept to a minimum.

In Episode Six the plot is as follows:

Harry begins the day with a brandy and over breakfast rejects both Joan's offer of fish pie for lunch and her joke about the alcohol on his breath. He arrives at work to discover it idle, the workers sitting on their machines. He is responsible. Harry runs to his office, opens the mail and makes a call to a local school in the hope of work, only to find that Foster, his boss, is already there. He opens a drawer, takes out a quarter of brandy and drinks from the bottle.

Meanwhile Joan, busy with her housework, receives a telephone call from an old friend of Harry's, Stephen Kenyon, who wants to get in touch with Harry about some work. Kenyon had only just heard of Harry's heart attack, a piece of information which makes Joan suspicious.

Back at the works Foster intrudes and Harry is given both a talking down and the threat of the sack if a large order is not produced and produced quickly. By the evening Harry is both depressed and drunk. He won't eat and he lies to Joan about his previous week's trip to London, a visit during which Joan believed he had met Kenyon. Bedtime is an occasion for Joan to help Harry into his pyjamas but also to check the truth of his story in the diary once he is asleep. She realises Harry has been lying.

Next day, Saturday, Joan gardens while Harry and Kenyon meet

in the City. The deal is, in principle, agreed. Kenyon will come
down to Tunbridge Wells and see the works after the weekend.
Harry, delighted but slightly the worse for wear and having driven
his Bentley into Joan's wheelbarrow, arrives home to find daughter
Kate in residence. Kate's present of a bottle is eagerly accepted.

Sunday morning finds Joan finishing her gardening and leaving
for church. Kate and Harry, both involved in their work, discuss
some aspects of the printing industry, a discussion which leads
to a row, principally, as Kate points out, over the fact that she
earns considerably more than her father. Joan's return and inter-
ruption serves only to fan the flames. Kate stamps out of the house.

However, tempers cool and the following morning Kate and
Harry make up. His lunch with Kenyon and Foster goes well and
the deal is agreed; later, in Harry's office, they sign it. But while
this is going on an apprentice, Dale, plans and executes a practical
joke; he jams a potato up the exhaust of Harry's Bentley. The
ensuing mild explosion prompts Harry to run into the works, find
Dale, and attack him. He is pulled off by Kenyon and Foster.

Joan returns that evening to find Harry alone in the dark. He
tells her of the loss of his job and of the attack. They are led into
an increasingly heated and desperate analysis of their past together,
Harry's old and more recent ' affairs ', and their lack of future. They
both end up exhausted and defeated.

Early next morning Harry awakes to find Joan's bed empty. He
quickly dresses and discovers her walking in the garden. She does
not want to come in. They begin to discuss their past and to
discover the possibility both of coming to terms with it and of
being able to make positive decisions about their future. Harry
wants to work for himself. They realise the enormity of the propo-
sition and its implications – the selling of the house, the car, the
discovery of who their friends really are. They test their ideas on
Kate who is delighted.

Finally, after finding themselves separately in situations redolent
of the past, Joan and Harry come together in the garden. They
express their mutual fears and anxiety but they resolve to face
the future together. Hand in hand they walk back to the house.

The Approach
The nature of the approach followed in this analysis can best be
clarified by referring to a distinction made within the unit of
signification, the sign, firstly by Saussure and then by Hjelmslev.
For Saussure, the sign comprised the signifier and the signified,
the former being associated (in spoken language) with the sound
image and the latter with the concept (*Course in General Lin-
guistics*, Fontana, London 1974, p 67). Hjelmslev, in an elaboration
of this basic dichotomy, suggests that the sign (more strictly a
semiotic) can be considered in terms of four basic, though of

14 course inter-related elements,[1] as follows:

1. The form of
2. The substance of

the expression (= Saussure's signifier)

3. The form of
4. The substance of

the content (= Saussure's signified)

Metz's description in ' Methodological Propositions for the Analysis of Film ' (op cit, p 97) follows Hjelmslev and it is clear that he is concerned, at least in the ' Grande Syntagmatique ', with an analysis of the *form of the expression* of the cinematic sign (that is with the intrinsic organisation of four of the five *substances* in film: specifically, the moving photographic image, recorded noise, phonetic sound and recorded musical sound – the *Grande Syntagmatique* ignores the fifth, written titles), an intrinsic organisation defined, however, only by reference to the *form of the content*.

The object of the present analysis is, still using the Hjelmslevian distinction, the form of the content, in other words the syntactic and semantic structures which incorporate cultural content, the substance of the content, into the narrative. More generally the distinction is made, for example by Metz himself (*Film Language*, OUP, London 1974, p 62), between the study of the specific cinematographic systems and the study of narrativity. The major implications of the difference of approach is that the former, Metz's, will inevitably attempt to define what is specific to film, while the latter will just as inevitably concentrate on what is present in film or television, but not exclusively so.

Metz
An analysis of Episode Six following Metz's formulation of the ' Grand Syntagmatique ' is included here. The limitations of that early formulation have been widely noted, not the least by Metz

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1. *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, Madison, Wisconsin 1963, p 75. This description follows Metz's own deliberately simplified analysis in ' Methodological Propositions for the Analysis of Film ' (*Screen* v 14 nn 1/2, Spring-Summer 1973, pp 96ff). In a footnote (p 101), Metz draws attention to the problems of transferring the often unclear formulations of Hjelmslev to the analysis of film, and in particular to the problems involved in the inclusion of the term *matter* (or *purport*). In his glossary (*Screen* v 14 nn 1/2, op cit, pp 222-3), Stephen Heath explains matter or purport in terms of the ' initially amorphous instance in which form is inscribed and manifested ', with the consequence that *substance* is what results from the juxtaposition of matter or purport and form. As used here, and by Metz in the above article, therefore, *substance* might be a misnomer. It is hoped, however, that this lack of terminological precision does not distort the sense of the description.

himself, but while it can be shown how inadequate the ' Grande
Syntagmatique ' is in exploring anything other than ' classic '
narratives, it remains of some pertinence within that range and
clearly so in narratives such as those of *Intimate Strangers* in
which the diegesis has a natural or realistic chronology and pattern
of action. Metz then allows a more or less systematic classification
of the narrative according to the form of its expression, and while
there might and often will be room for argument both as to the
exact definition of the units and indeed their correct labelling,
these disputes will be minimal in narratives of such comparative
simplicity.

Indeed an analysis of this narrative into the syntagma suggested
by Metz does seem to reveal a fundamental simplicity of construc-
tion. It will be noted that of the 23 autonomous segments iden-
tified in this episode, 15 are simple scenes or sequences while a
further 3 (9, 10, 12) would have been added if Metz's formulation
had been strictly adhered to. It is possible, of course, that the .
Metzian categories are insufficiently subtle to recognise anything
but the most crude distinctions and therefore tend to oversimplify
and rigidify the texts to which they are applied. However the 23
autonomous segments in this episode of *Intimate Strangers* do
seem to have a significant identity and one reinforced by an analysis
of the form of the content within a Proppian classification. It could
be argued that it is precisely on narratives of this kind, likely to
be predominant in the television message, that Metz's type of
analysis is most useful; at the very least both as a preliminary
classification and as the basis for comparison between programmes
or genres.

<p align="center">Intimate Strangers Episode Six:
Metzian Analysis</p>

TIME (minutes and seconds)

00.00	00.30	CREDITS
00.30		1. *Sequence* Early morning. Joan and Harry. Continuity of action; immediately before and after the act of eating breakfast. (Not entirely unproblematical:
	02.35	conceivably two scenes.)
02.35		2. *Scene* Harry's arrival at work: a continuous action, despite Harry's disappearance from the image, and continuous in time: his reappearance is anti-cipated. A separation in space (inside/outside) but the continuity of time and action indicates
	04.57	a scene.

04.57		3. *Alternating Syntagm (2: Telephone)*[2]

The conversation between Joan and Kenyon: uneven but distinct. The slight extension of attention to Joan at the end does not disqualify the

06.30   categorisation or indicate a separate segment.

06.30   4. *Scene*

07.40   Harry and Foster at work.

07.40   5. *Scene*

10.57   Harry and Joan at dinner.

10.57   6. *Scene*

12.44   Harry and Joan in the bedroom.

12.44   7. *Alternating Syntagm (1: Chase)*

Joan at home. Harry and Kenyon discuss the plans. The link is a comparative one. While there is only one alternation, the juxtaposition of Joan (minimum action/natural)[3] and Harry (maximum action/cultural) suggests we should take this as

14.24   one segment.

14.24   8. *Scene*

15.22   Kate and Joan.

15.22   9. *Connected Syntagm (Scene 2)*[4]

Harry's drive and minor accident. Cut to Joan and Kate awaiting him inside the house. Harry enters and new (inter-) action develops: but separation and linking of action and space (inside/

19.44   outside).

2. In two cases, this being one, it was found empirically necessary to refine the Metzian classification. Here two different types of alternation are recognised, the one exemplified by the telephone conversation, the other, the alternation described by Metz, exemplified by the chase. Very simply what distinguishes them is their different quality of time and action: in the one, the telephone conversation, time is sequential during the action and actions within the alternation are linked but separate; in the chase there is a clear indication of simultaneity of time – the police car and the getaway car are moving closer together – while the action is cumulative; it is likely that the two will meet.

3. The natural/cultural distinction is not one that intrudes or should intrude at this level of analysis; it is drawn upon here simply in order to specify or reinforce the nature of the contrast and the unity of the segment.

4. The second refinement occurs in the gap between the scene and the sequence. Here, using similar criteria of space, time and action, one can distinguish the connected syntagm from the scene. The latter defines a simple unity of space, time and action; the connected syntagm defines an autonomous segment in which a continuity of time holds together two spatially separate but linked actions. The paradigm is an articulation of inside/outside actions.

19.44   10. *Connected Syntagm (Scene 2)*
                         Joan in garden: finishes work. Comes inside and
                         meets Kate and Harry. Again continuity of time,
            21.10   but linked separation of action and space.

21.10   11. *Scene*
                         Joan at Church. More than one shot. Clearly a
            21.57   separate segment.

21.57   12. *Connected Syntagm (Scene 2)*
                         Harry and Kate begin their row. Joan arrives out-
                         side the house. Stops and listens. Back inside for
                         Joan's entrance. This is a borderline Scene/Con-
                         nected Syntagm – the dependence is on the signi-
                         ficance of Joan's arrival as a separate action (and
            24.54   indeed separate place: outside/inside again).

24.54   13. *Descriptive Syntagm*
                         Narratively both time and action are insignificant,
                         though clearly not exorcised completely. Possibly
                         Parallel – depending precisely on a subjective
                         determination of the passage of time. She looks
                         up at the window: cut to Harry asleep. An indi-
            25.09   cation of simultaneity.

25.09   14. *Scene*
            25.45   Joan and Harry and Kate in the Kitchen.

25.45   15. *Scene*
            27.07   Harry and Foster and Kenyon. The deal is agreed.

27.07   16. *Scene*
            27.21   Dale, the apprentice, makes his plan.

27.21   17. *Scene*
            27.33   Harry, Kenyon and Foster sign.

27.33   18. *Connected Syntagm (Scene 2)*
                         The explosion in the car: Kenyon and Harry rush
                         to the exhaust. Foster joins them. Harry runs
                         inside. Hand-held eye-view shot. Harry attacks
                         Dale. Clearly a difficult segment to place. Linked
                         but separate actions and places. Almost certainly
            28.26   a continuity of time.

28.26   19. *Scene*
            37.17   Joan and Harry have it out.

                         END OF PART TWO

37.17   20. *Sequence*
                         Harry wakes up alone. Sees the empty bed. Cut

		to Joan walking alone in the garden: Harry appears, dressed, behind her. *Then* continuity of time, space and action. Basically continuity of
	46.52	action but a break in time.
46.52		21. *Scene*
	47.57	Harry, Joan and Kate discuss the plans.
47.57		22. *Episodic Sequence*
		A series of related but uncompleted actions sum-
	49.05	marisable under the heading ' Past '.
49.05		23. *Scene*
		Harry and Joan in the garden. The break from 22 is indicated by their coming together, and
	51.53	their subsequent interaction. End Credits.

Propp

1. The move from a Metzian analysis to one centred on the work of Vladimir Propp involves, firstly, a change in attention from the signifier to the signified, or more particularly, to the form of the content, to the study of narrativity *per se;* secondly, a transition from relative simplicity to increasing complexity; and thirdly, a recognition, at least as far as television is concerned, of the significant, though by no means total, dominance of the verbal over the visual message. The basic point of reference for Metz's analysis in the ' Grande Syntagmatique ' is the visual montage. With Propp the concern is with the linearity of the spoken or written word, a linearity beloved of the classical narrative and clearly imposed on a major part of television's drama.

Propp's analysis of the Russian folktale involves, very simply, a consideration of the folktale as a system in which it is possible to identify separate narrative functions; thirty-one in all.[5] He argues that these functions are the basis from which any individual folktale is constructed, that they follow one another in sequence and that there is a necessity in that sequence. The functions are identified by reference to particular narrated actions. The roles associated with these actions are considered as dependent.

' The scheme is a *measuring unit* for individual tales. . . . The application of the given schema to various tales can also define the relationships of the tales among themselves. We already foresee that the problems of kinship of tales, the problem of themes and

5. ' Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action' (*Morphology of the Folktale*, University of Texas Press, Austin and London 1968, p 21).

variants, thanks to this, may receive a new solution ' (op cit, p 65).

Propp's analysis provides a way of approaching the narrative in a *text very directly and very clearly. Herein lies the reason for its* use. The point is not so much to prove Propp right, to accept his theory *in toto* or to justify the details of his results. Indeed there are a number of more or less serious problems associated with the theory's application. The point is, above all, to show that a narrative such as that of the television message can be approached with this degree of formalisation and that such an approach is useful and productive for our understanding of it. Secondly, the point is to explore to what extent the same categories are relevant to both types of text, in other words whether a formal comparison of the folktale and the ' teletale ' is possible. The object, then, is to identify the narrative, specifically in the texts which are to be analysed and generally with reference to other, previously and yet to be analysed texts.

2. Propp has been criticised from two perspectives. Lévi-Strauss opposes Propp's formalism with his own structuralism, above all rejecting the distinction between form and content, a distinction which tends to disqualify the necessary attempt to relate the folktale to a particular social and historical context. This is a fairly obvious limitation of the Proppian type of analysis and one of which, no doubt, Propp was aware. The work of Greimas goes some way towards meeting these objections and at the same time provides a bridge between the formalist and structuralist modes of analysis.

In his *Logique du récit* (Paris 1973), Bremond objects both to the imposition of a single linearity on the narrative by Propp and to the denial of narrative possibility. The objection is to the *a posteriori* nature of a Proppian analysis which, Bremond argues, bears no relation to the way the narrative is either spoken or heard. Rather than a functional analysis therefore Bremond prefers one which produces a logic of action in which a particular act can at the moment of its effect have a number of possible outcomes which may be both differently valued and differently affect the characters (actors) involved. The full implications of such a method are explored in *Logique du récit*, but the classification which he suggests is in practice both difficult and cumbersome, and one is left with a logic of action rather than a logic of narrative; the narrative tends to get badly lost.

In the analysis which follows, however, while the identification of the functions (labelled according to Propp's classification – see Appendix p 39) remains true to Propp, there is no insistence on his demand for a single sequential pattern. Other extensions and modifications will be discussed below.

1. $\delta\gamma DEF(-)/a$ The opening sequence. Harry's surreptitious
                    early morning drink is already a violation, δ,
                    of a warning, γ, implicit in Joan's look. Joan's
                    offer of breakfast and lunch, D, is rejected, and
                    this rejection, E, involves a denial of Joan's
                    support and/or understanding, F−. This ' DEF '
                    sequence of testing, of which there will be
                    many examples, does in this case *as a whole*
                    indicate the nature of the lack, a, of relation-
                    ship. Its identification here in fact demands
                    knowledge of the series, knowledge which
                    makes it more explicit than it otherwise would
                    be.

2. $B^4\int aC$ This segment is concerned above all with
                    Harry's lack of work, a. His response to the
                    idle works, to open his letters, to ring the
                    bursar and to take a drink, is indicated by C,
                    consent to counteraction. The main problem
                    concerns the identity of B^4 and of $\int$, both of
                    which refer to the provision of information, the
                    former of information about the lack (lack of
                    noise indicating lack of work); the latter of
                    information about a villain. While, given the
                    alternatives provided by Propp, the labelling
                    is less arbitrary than it might be, in general
                    the introduction of information into the narra-
                    tive is not well handled. Indeed this is of
                    some significance for contemporary narratives
                    which seem to rely, in their complexity, on the
                    transmission of information of one sort or
                    another as a fundamental part of the story-
                    telling. . The second problem concerns the
                    presence of the villain. In *Intimate Strangers*
                    a villain as such rarely appears, though
                    functions which, according to Propp, demand
                    the presence of one are clearly identifiable. In
                    this case the villain is Foster.

3. $\int$ A segment involved in the provision of inform-
                    ation. Kenyon tells Joan that he might have
                    work for Harry (this is relevant to a:work)
                    but also sows seeds of doubt in Joan's mind
                    about Harry's recent trip to London (a:rela-
                    tionship).

4. $(\delta)B^2C\S$ (δ) indicates the continuing violation of the

warning not to drink. Foster now reveals him-
self as a functionally complex figure: in one
sense it is clear that here he acts as a dis-
patcher, defining the task for Harry and sup-
porting that definition with threats (hence
Propp's B^2), but maintains his position as at
least an implicit villain, precisely because he
has it in his power to thwart Harry's progress
(by giving him the sack). C indicates Harry's
consent to counteraction and § indicates a
more or less catch-all category (also concerned
with the transmission of information) which
Propp calls a connective – in this case the ring-
ing of the phone and Harry's recognition of
Kenyon's voice.

5. $(\delta)\text{DE}\atop\text{DE}$$(F+/-)$ (δ) drink. Two tests are involved here, both of
which are incomplete. The first is the alienat-
ing test, basically a repetition of the one in 1;
the other is Harry's subterfuge over his trip to
London. Joan is upset but her denial of sup-
port and/or her acceptance of Harry's story
is still left open (to 6). $(F+/-)$ indicates there-
fore an incomplete but complex conclusion.
(Strictly F has to do with the provision or
denial of a magical agent. Clearly in this con-
text it is legitimate to demystify it slightly.
We are concerned with the provision or denial
of help with regard to the liquidation of the
initial lack.)

6. $\text{F/E}(\varepsilon\varsigma)\text{F}-/\text{A(a)}$ A difficult and complex scene involving decep-
tion and the receipt of information. Joan comes
close to villainy: F/E indicates Joan's response
to Harry's drunkenness; her provision of help,
E, is at the same time her reaction, F, to the
challenge of Harry's lie. $(\varepsilon\varsigma)$ indicates the
nature of this response, ie $E(\varepsilon\varsigma)$, reconnais-
sance and receipt of information. $F-/$ indicates
her negative reaction and the implict denial
of support for Harry (a). So, in all, this seg-
ment is both a summary and a clear statement
of the lack in their relationship (a) overdeter-
mined, as it were, by Harry's past villainy and
Joan's present villainy, A.

7. $(F-)\text{DE}$ Joan is alone in the garden. Her solitude is to
be seen as a reaffirmation of her implicit denial
of Harry in 6, as well as a general statement

about the lack of relationship. DE indicates Kenyon's promise of a contract which is his first function as a donor: Harry responds, E. The conclusion remains to be stated. Hence, even in a ' static ' Proppian analysis we can recognise in the DE→F sequence the dynamic possibility DE, definition (F) and the necessity of this interrelation. There is a sense in which D and E need to be completed (see below) and it is this necessity which provides one aspect of the dynamic in the narrative.

8. D§

Joan and Kate: D indicates Kate's first function as donor (of a drink specifically), and we are aware, as she becomes aware, of the equivocality of the gift; §: Joan provides Kate with the information (and reminds us of the implications of Harry's situation).

9. §EFDEF (not+ not−)

Harry's altercation with the wheelbarrow is heavily symbolic, but otherwise narratively neutral. It provides in addition specific information about Harry's drunken state. The first EF indicates Harry's generally positive response to Kate's bottle, and the fragile interaction, F, which results. The second DEF(not +/not−) involves Harry's and Kate's confrontation over her income, F(not+/not−) suggests a central and open result that there is more to come, in other words that the offer/acceptance of the magical agent (support/understanding) is still held in abeyance.

END OF PART ONE

10. §

The suspense with regard to the resolution of the test in 9, maintained by a narratively neutral segment, providing only very general information: it is Sunday, Joan works separately and goes to church separately, Kate and Harry, the contestants in unfinished business, remain.

11. §

Re-emphasis of Joan's separation.

12. DEF(−)

A complex segment; the DEF test involves Harry and Kate, the final negativity of F(−) being reinforced by Joan's appearance and involvement. Strictly both Harry and Kate act as separate donors: Harry of information, accepted by Kate as helpful in the pursuit of

her particular tasks; and this in turn leads to   23
the providing of information (about her rela-
tionship with Bob) which Harry finds objec-
tionable. In both cases then, the first function
of the donor is the provision of information.
The end result is the denial of support for
Harry, and his increasing isolation — he is
getting further away and further away, it
would seem, from the liquidation of lack
(a: relationship) and the denial of help by
Kate only adds another dimension (see 14).

13. (a)   A connecting segment emphasising lack of
                relationships (a: relationship).

14. (D)EF   This concerns the neutralisation of 12, but of
                a limited kind. Harry apologises and has Kate's
                support in his pursuit of lack (a: work), but it
                is not a major event for the narrative, and
                Kate remains a fairly equivocal helper. (D):
                Harry's apology; E: Kate's friendly response;
                F: support for Harry: a 'magical agent' to
                take with him on his search.

15. (δ)F/H   F in relation to DE in segment 7 above. H
                indicates the struggle with the villain — the
                beginning of the main test with reference to
                the lack, a: work. A multi-functionality is in-
                volved. Kenyon agrees to the deal, F, and in
                so doing offers Harry the key to the eradication
                of the threat of the sack. It becomes part of
                the main test and the struggle with the villain
                because Foster is now all that separates him
                from achieving the fulfilment of the task. (δ)
                once again refers to the drinking prohibition.

16. B⁴   Dale's announcement of his yet unspecified
                villainy. (Dale is Foster's apprentice — villainy
                at one remove indicates perhaps a recognition
                of the problem of villain/dispatcher.)

17. IK   The liquidation, apparently, of the lack, K,
                by virtue of Harry's victory, I, over the villain.

18. MN−/Q−U−/a Propp indicates that in the narrative there
                usually follows a further test, once the main
                test (with reference to the stated lack) has
                been completed. This test involves the hero
                once again, and involves, often, the necessity
                to prove his rightful title to the object of the
                search. It is possible, though Propp does not

indicate the possibility, that the hero can fail in this test. Here Harry fails. M, the difficult task (how to deal with the explosion). $N(-)$, Harry's negative resolution (he attacks the apprentice). MN implicate $Q(-)$ the (non)-recognition of the hero and $U(-)$ the (non)-punishment of the false hero or villain. Harry goes unrecognised and he is punished as though he were a villain – by the very punishment which negates the previous success: his lack (of work) is reaffirmed.

19. §
   $DE(-)F(-)/$
   $HI(-)/$
   $K(-)/$
   $Q(-)/$
   $W(-)/$

The major scene of the episode and the series. Its analysis depends partially on its place in the series which makes the categorisation suggested fairly safe. As a result of the negativity of 18, Harry returns home. He reports (§) what happened. What follows is a final (qualifying) test for Harry from Joan – the test which has as its source his trip to London. This test fails; Harry responds negatively; they are still separate; no magic. $DE(-)F(-)$; this test however is magnified in its narrative significance. The failure, $F(-)$, explains what is at stake (ie the lack – a: relationship). H and I indicates the intensity of the struggle, the main test with regard to lack though without a clearly defined villain (is it Harry? Is it Joan, is it circumstance?). As a result the lack is unliquidated, $K(-)$. Harry is unrecognised, $Q(-)$ and the wedding which should follow a successful outcome is transferred to its near opposite, $W(-)$, the threat of a split – in other words a re-emphasis of the initial lack (a: relationship). We can follow Propp here, in identifying the end of a *move*, which by virtue of its negativity indicates that a new move is to follow.

END OF PART TWO

20. $\alpha\beta\epsilon\mathcal{J}aBC$

If, as seems reasonable, the final function in 19 is $W(-)$, then the first part of the series' narrative is complete, and indeed within the episode itself there is a clear break. There is no clear break like this in any other episode, and for this structural reason, as well as more obvious ones to do with context, Episode Six is seen to be pivotal. α announces a new situation, and a new move. In the early explanation

and discussion of the situation the following preparatory functions can be identified: β absentation (of Joan); ε reconnaissance (by Harry to find Joan); ζ information received by Harry about Joan (and vice-versa). What follows. is the statement of the problem: the lack (a: relationship); its discussion B (what Propp calls the mediating incident); and C their joint consent to counteraction.

21. DEF   Harry and Joan test Kate, in search of support. They get it.

22. §   This episodic sequence serves a basically connective function — memories, the past symbolised (incidentally an example of a complex signifier with a simple signified).

23. §   A further connective — this time looking, with trepidation, to the future.

END

It may be presumptuous to say that what is surprising here is not that a Proppian analysis can be shown to fit a narrative such as this, but how well it seems to do so. Perhaps a number of fairly basic points can be made:

a. Two groups of functions are not included in the analysis: the first refers to the hero's journeys ($\uparrow$, G, $\downarrow$, Pr/Rs). The last of these, Pr/Rs (pursuit and rescue), do not appear in this episode. While the first three do, they are not explicit, the journeys being made between contiguous segments, in the cut as it were. The full semantic significance of these displacements cannot be discussed here. The second function, branding or mark, J, only appears indirectly in the series in terms of the ' mark ' of ill-health imposed by Harry's initial heart-attack at the end of Episode One, a mark removed by his clean bill of health in the last episode.

b. The ' magical agents ' received as the end result of the test which Greimas describes as ' qualifying ' are not in this series generally material. They can be, of course (in Episode Four Harry seeks money in this context), but more often the magical agent offered or denied is likely to be support of a social-psychological nature. This is quite consistent with the tenor of the drama as a whole.

c. Related to this is the lack (which is relative rather than absolute) of a material villain. The three main *lacks* (Propp's a) in the series (only two of which are significantly treated in this episode), ie lack of health (natural); lack of work (cultural); lack of relationship (cultural/natural), are announced predominantly as

the result not of some villainy but through circumstance or fate. While the lack in the relationship is evident before the heart attack, it is this which both reveals it in its significance and at the same time provokes the third lack, the lack of work. The heart attack is the villain but is beyond social or psychological control. Reasons for such an absence of a material villain might be found either in terms of ' genre ' or in certain aspects of the predominant ideology of the culture.

d. Finally, the achievement, if such it be, of this form of analysis, supported incidentally by similar analyses on the other episodes of the series, might be seen to be significant in two respects:

(i) it indicates that a narrative as relatively complex as this one can be coded (it does not indicate that this is the only coding), and

(ii) that this ability to code a narrative such as this with the tools developed for a completely differently situated and differently expressed narrative should indicate that there is something identifiable as ' Narrative ' in diverse texts,[6] and that from this basic structural consistency (still of course to be defined fully), differences in genre, differences from culture to culture could be described. In this sense the Proppian hope already quoted, while it still is to be achieved, has yet to be denied.

3. Of the possibly many issues which arise from the preceding analysis four will be briefly discussed.

A. *Bundling:* It is clear that while one baulks at accepting Propp's arguments on the overall necessity for a unilinear narrative, it is still possible to identify the existence of bundles of functions that both go together and demand each other, as well as a more general, loosely defined linear pattern. The context of linearity is aptly defined by Souriau in terms of the existence of a beginning and an end in the narrative between which something happens. Beneath all the relative sophistication of analysis this is still both true and obvious, Within Propp's scheme this narrative is initiated by the lack or the villainy and completed by the recognition of its liquidation or redemption. Within this relatively unspecific determination it is possible to identify, and here there is an anticipation of Greimas, three significant bundles of functions through which the narrative passes and by virtue of which one recognises its dynamic nature.

DEF: Greimas calls this the qualifying test. Here the hero[7] asks

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6. This is still true despite the ' weakening ' of the Proppian model already discussed.

7. The hero is treated as an unproblematical character in this discussion. His status has been widely discussed, and see, for example, A J Greimas: *Sémantique structurale,* Paris 1966, pp 172-8 and C Bremond: *Logique du récit,* op cit, *passim.*

for or is offered help in the form of a ' magical agent '. It is possible to identify three sub-forms:

(i) the basic form is the one in which the donor tests, the hero responds and success or failure ensues;

(ii) the inverted form occurs when the hero asks, the donor responds and success or failure ensues;

(iii) the reflexive form occurs when the hero and the donor are interchangeable and clear mutual testing takes place.

These have not been defined specifically in the analysis above, but the context in most cases makes it clear which one is relevant.

HIK: The main test, the test in which the hero confronts his main adversary or is faced, in the absence of a clear adversary, with a situation which when satisfactorily resolved will result in the liquidation of the initial lack and/or the redemption of the villainy. The distinction between the two types of test is usually made on the basis of what follows in the event of successful completion; in the qualifying test the means to an end is gained, in the latter, the main test, the end itself is. -

MNQ: The glorifying test (after Greimas) in which the hero, having apparently achieved this goal, is further tested in order to prove that he is the true hero.

Three general points can be made:

(i) The presence of DE, HI, or MN in a narrative demands the existence somewhere of respectively F, K and Q. Because of this demand, delay in the presentation of these latter functions suggests a more or less deliberate way open to the narrative to increase the tension.

(ii) There can be many qualifying tests in a narrative as well as many glorifying tests. Indeed it would be fair to say that Episodes Ten, Eleven and Twelve constitute glorifying tests in the context of the serial narrative. However it would be unusual if there were more than one main test associated with one lack. The main test is therefore the pivot upon which the narrative as a whole is balanced.

(iii) Finally, and again in anticipation of a later point of the analysis, one can distinguish D, H and M from E, I and N and from F, K and Q. D, H and M are introductory functions in their respective tests, but they also indicate the test's context. The nature of the challenge suggests a particular semantic structure (isotopy) within which the specific test can be interpreted. For instance a significant portion of the qualifying testing of Harry by Joan and indeed by Kate in Episode Six is of an alimentary nature; the offering of and acceptance/refusal of food or drink. It is the first function which identifies this context, the nature of the challenge and allows specific comparison with tests similarly situated but perhaps different in other respects (see below). E, K and N mediate between these contexts (alimentary, economic, sexual etc) and the next and narratively most significant function. F, K and Q register

the success or failure of the tests. These functions, indicating as they do the completion of the test, are fundamental in moving the narrative forward. Even if the reaction is a neutral one (eg F not+/not−) the dynamic of the narrative is preserved.

B. *Multifunctionality:* There are two types of multifunctionality in the narrative, the first discussed by Propp (op cit, pp 66-76) and the second in part referred to by him (p 100) though in reference to pairing of functions and not to the bundling here described and discussed, similarly, by Greimas.

1. The multifunctionality of simultaneity (indicated by the oblique stroke in the above analysis) where the narrative demands the recognition that one action or sets of actions fulfil more than one function (eg six in Episode Six, above).

2. The multifunctionality of sequentiality overlaps with this. Here we are concerned with the existence of a bundle of functions in which the presence of one implies the other two. It is possible that only one of the functions is stated, most likely F (the success of the hero, the receipt of a ' magical agent '), in which case one must infer the existence, otherwise unstated, of D and E.

C. *Lack:* There are in the series three dominant lacks each motivating one main thread in the narrative. A lack, a, is assumed to be a subjectively felt and an initially passive imposition, as compared to villainy which might be considered as objectively determinable and actively imposed. As has already been noted, both villainy and villain are generally absent in this series.

The overall series lack, a, is natural and cultural health; the one (the heart attack) causing the other (the lack of a job), while the regaining of one (his self-employment) suggests the other (his clean bill of health in Episode Thirteen). They are of differential and uneven importance in the series; while the heart attack is the catalyst of the action, the narrative thread associated with it is, subsequently, weak whereas the secondary lack (of work) assumes dominance.

Between these two lacks one can recognise a third, which both precedes them, mediates them and is exacerbated by them − the lack in their relationship (in their marriage: an imposition of culture on nature). These various lacks affect Joan and Harry differentially: Joan is closer to nature by virtue of her sex and her involvement in the garden, and this over-determination of her naturalness suggests that she is in a position to advance Harry's cure. Harry, literally, has to work at it. But it is the quality of their relationship on which ultimately both their natural and cultural health depend. In this episode the context is primarily cultural (Harry's work) and cultural/natural (their relationship).

D. *Information:* Propp (*Morphology of the Folktale*, op cit, pp

71-4), in discussing the significance of the provision of inform-
ation in the narrative, draws attention to a number of ways in
which functionally important information can be introduced, above
all by direct notification (B⁴, ʃ), through connectives (§) or as an
intrinsic part of an already defined function, for example Q.

The analysis is of limited value and there is a strong case,
particularly in dealing with contemporary narratives, and even
more particularly those of television and film, for developing it
(see Peter Wollen: 'North by North-West: a Morphological
Analysis', *Film Form* v 1 n 1, Spring 1976, p 32). The transmission
of information is often of direct significance and can, of course,
determine entirely the development of any given narrative. While
an aspect of the problem is dealt with by Greimas it would appear
to be necessary to define more clearly the distinctive types of
information, either according to context and therefore in terms
of time and space coordinates, or in terms of functional signifi-
cance and therefore in terms of action – or indeed in terms of
both. But this is a problem which has yet to be resolved.

Greimas

1. With Propp the units of the narrative can be identified, placed
chronologically and used as a basis for comparison and classifica-
tion of different narratives. The introduction of the work of A J
Greimas implies that more can be said and done.

Greimas's structural semantics is firmly Saussurean. He
approaches the problem of meaning both in terms of its paradig-
matic and syntagmatic structure. Each semantic unit is located in
the metonymy of the specific text and metaphorically outside it.
The sentence and the narrative discourse are both equally approach-
able, though it is at the level of the sentence that he considers
the detailed problems of semantics and at the level of the narra-
tive that he considers how meanings are transformed. His work
links very closely to that of Lévi-Strauss and, as will be seen, to
that of Propp.

The narrative is understood therefore not in formal, but in
linguistic terms and as such the predominantly inductive analysis
of Propp (a classification based on the analysis of actual texts) is
replaced by a predominantly deductive theory. While Propp treats
the Russian folktale and expects other narratives might be simi-
larly ordered, Greimas produces a model of narrative against which
specific narratives can be tested and through which creation and
transformation of meaning can be discussed. The two approaches
are therefore qualitatively different. Propp's is both close to the
text and faithfully reproduces its chronology; Greimas's lies away
from the specific text and replaces chronology by a logic which

seeks to establish links between the elements of the model irrespective of their particular place and position in the text. This distance allows both a consideration of the narrative as its own system and at the same time as an element in a larger system of the narrative-discourse. Meanings, although of course dependent on the semantic context of the culture, are defined by the intrinsic grammar of the text, its transformational structure, and the grammar of the system as a whole, the rules governing the creation of units of meanings. The construction of a given narrative will be replaced by a reconstruction which should reveal the original text's essential nature.

Greimas's approach depends on the ability to distinguish within the semantic unit two further units. At the level of narrative analysis the first might be called the nucleus, the unit of action whose recognition depends on the establishment of its functionality. The second might be described in terms of the context within which the nucleic action is placed (Greimas's own distinction is between the nucleic figure and the classeme). Context here is a wide term which includes all the aspects of an action which place it, give it meaning and finally can be strictly coded.

A particular qualifying test, for example, consists both in the action (the approach, the acceptance of the challenge, the result) and the context (of what the test consists, where it is placed, who is involved etc). The elements of a test in which Joan offers Harry a meal at home and which Harry refuses, are to be distinguished from a similar test in which on the completion of a meal Harry and Kenyon agree to a contract. In this case what is common is not only a similarity of function but the alimentary context and the presence of Harry (culture hero/anti-hero). What is different is the location (home: culture/nature: negative response and failure; and work: culture: positive response and success) and those involved (female helper/opposer; and male helper). Indeed one could continue to analyse those functional units according to any number of culturally determined codes.

Such an analysis would be both rich and complex and it has scarcely begun. It is nevertheless worth drawing attention to the significance of place/space/location in the semantics of the television narrative. To do so involves making a further distinction. Within the narrative as a whole space must be considered as a particular context in which different actions are placed and according to which they can be distinguished. The context (space) is a constant in its presence, but not constant in its content – there are different locations. The specific locations are equivalent to the lexemes of a sentence. Given their identification it becomes necessary to reduce their diversity into a manageable and logically distinguishable set of categories.

I have found it useful to distinguish space according to whether it is predominantly cultural or natural, a distinction which has

some justification at the level of content but does not depend on it. In *Intimate Strangers* action is placed in predominantly three spatial contexts: the garden, the house, and at work (the city/office). With the nature/culture dichotomy it is possible to distinguish and relate these three locations as: garden (nature), home (nature/culture, ie the major location of marriage: culture/sex: nature), and work (culture).

Within the narrative of *Intimate Strangers* there are a number of major movements: from home to garden to home in Episodes One and Two; to and from work in Episode Six. In Episode Seven Harry, having lost his job (his attachment to work/culture), sells his house and Joan's garden and buys a shop with a flat above (culture and culture/nature), without a garden (denial of, lack of nature). I believe, but I do not think that it is at all firmly established, that these moves are significant on two counts.

Firstly, the narrative is concerned *inter alia* with the problem of woman in society and it is through the differential actions and locations both of men (predominantly Harry) and women (predominantly Joan, but also her daughters, her friends, Harry's mother, a female doctor, a female accountant and some oil paintings) that this is articulated. The narrative places woman marginally in relation to man's centrality; whereas man is a cultural figure (Harry loses his manhood when he loses his job) woman is always mediating between (the man's) culture and nature. This is clearly a traditional approach to a current cultural preoccupation; it is appropriate to the content in the sense that it probably accurately reflects the ideology of its protagonists and it can also be seen to be a common preoccupation of other mythical narratives, for example the myths of the girl who was mad about honey discussed by Lévi-Strauss in *From Honey to Ashes.*

Secondly, another central concern of the narrative is man's desire to transcend the contradictions of the nature/culture dichotomy, either to deny it or more likely to incorporate it. The classic formulation of this desire is the myth of romantic love in which two naturally opposed figures (male:female) are united in one cultural unit, a cultural unit which has spiritual pretensions ('Make of our hearts one heart' in *West Side Story*). Once again one can identify a similar preoccupation, though with a different content, in the myths discussed by Lévi-Strauss.

This necessarily speculative account, has been introduced in order to reveal the potential of a semantic analysis such as suggested by Greimas, and of course by Lévi-Strauss. What is at issue is not simply that these preconceptions seem to exist in the current narrative but in what ways they are made manifest and defined, and what solutions are offered at the level of structure.

2. Greimas's involvement in the work of Propp stems from a desire

to develop a transformational model of the narrative in which meanings established by a semantic analysis are incorporated into a dynamic structure. Greimas finds Propp's thirty-one functions both unwieldy and indefinite. He also finds in them, though not without some difficult and occasionally confused reasoning, patterns which when redefined in turn define a coherent, systematic, balanced and logical structure for the narrative.

There are three basic elements in the model: the contract (notated A); what might be termed the axes of communication (notated C); and the tests (notated F).

Very briefly the contract defines the boundaries of the narrative. An initial situation which is usually negative is stated, $\overline{A}$, equivaler· o Propp's violation of a prohibition, which it is the task of · the ·rative to remedy. The narrative therefore ends with a summary statement of this redefinition, A, the offer and acceptance of a new contract.[8]

The narrative is articulated along three axes of communication corresponding both to the three tests and above all to their objects: knowledge, strength and the object of desire. Greimas suggests that in the Proppian initial situation not only is the contract broken but also the ' hero ' is alienated from his society by virtue of his non-recognition, by virtue of his impotence and by virtue of his lack or the villainy perpetrated on him. Each test, successfully completed, reintegrates the hero into society as he progressively gains strength, recognition and the object of his desire.

Following Greimas's notation this can be defined as follows:

1. $\overline{C_1}$ and C_1 $\overline{(\text{non } c_1: \ c_1:: \text{non } c_1: \ c_1)}$. The upper-case letters $\overline{C_1}$ and C_1 indicate respectively the alienation and reintegration of knowledge of or about the hero. Each of these categories consists of a pair of ' semic ' or semantic units (indicated by the lower-case letters) which provide it with specific content. The bar above (as in $\overline{C_1}$) indicates a negative opposition and should be read as *not*. (The relationship of the four elements can be illustrated in that if c is moral, then non c is immoral, $\overline{c}$ is amoral and $\overline{\text{non } c}$ is not immoral.) Strictly the subsidiary pairs should correspond to Proppian functions; they do so initially but the final correspondence, the situation of reintegration, is often not clear. Here $\overline{\text{non } c_1}$, and $\overline{c_1}$ correspond to Propp's reconnaissance (ε) and receipt of information (ζ), and non c_1 and c_1 to branding (J) and recognition of the hero (Q). So $\overline{C_1}$: C_1 :: alienation : reintegration of knowledge, and $\overline{C_1}$: $\overline{\text{non } c_1}$: $\overline{c_1}$ :: reconnaissance : receipt of information, and C_1 non c_1 : c_1 :: branding : recognition of the hero.

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8. $\overline{A}$ and A each contain two semantically opposite units, corresponding respectively to Propp's prohibition/violation and offer and acceptance of a contract (BC). Greimas notes them as $\overline{a}$: $\overline{\text{non } a}$ :: a : non a ; the significance of the logical scheme is briefly noted below (see the discussion of the axes of communication).

2. $\overline{C_2}$ and C_2 $(\overline{non\ c_2}:\ \overline{c_2} :: non\ c_2:\ c_2)$. This notation involves the alienation and integration of the hero's potency or strength, and as above the four subsidiary categories should correspond to Proppian functions; the initial two $(\overline{non\ c_2}:\ \overline{c_2})$ do quite clearly — $\overline{non\ c_2}$ is equivalent to deception (η) and $\overline{c_2}$ to the submission of the hero to that deception (θ). The hero in this transaction loses the power with which to assert his existence as hero, a loss which it is the first test's function to remedy. Non c_2 and c_2, the two reintegrating functions, are more difficult to define, but it seems likely that they refer to Propp's concluding functions (T) transfiguratio· ·f the hero and exposure (Ex) of the false hero. However the près. of non c_2 as a notation identifying the successful completion of the first and qualifying test (see below), while still concerned with the potency of the hero and his ability to act as one, seems to indicate the receipt of a magical agent (Propp's F, see *Sémantique structurale*, p 197). This confusion can be ameliorated, although perhaps only slightly, by the recognition that non c_2 as a function will only appear on its own as a conclusion to the test, while C_2 according to Greimas, is a concluding function that of necessity involves the simultaneous revelation of the power of the hero and of the existence and hence weakness of the ·villain.

3. $\overline{C_3}$ and C_3 $(\overline{non\ c_3}:\ \overline{c_3} :: non\ c_3:\ c_3)$. Here the involvement is with the alienation and reintegration of the object of search, and $\overline{C_3}$ signifies either villainy $(\overline{non\ c_3}$, Propp's A) or lack $(\overline{c_3}$, Propp's a), while non c_3 and c_3 signify the wedding of the hero (W) and the simultaneous punishment of the villain (Propp's U).

The complexity, predominantly of notation, belies the very real simplicity of Greimas's model; a transformational and synchronic system of balanced beginnings and endings has replaced Propp's chronology. The narrative creates meaning in the same way as does a sentence, and the hero in his passage from alienation to reintegration and from a situation of a contract ruptured to one in which it is re-established is literally transformed by his involvement in the various tests and in their contexts. Whereas for Propp the hero remains the hero and his various tasks are just so many hurdles on the way, for Greimas the 'hero' has to be created and significantly this creation is dependent finally on social recognition. In *Intimate Strangers*, for example, Harry is transformed from a man, alive and working, with a wife and a home, to a non-man, close to death, out of work, with no relationship with his wife and for a time no home, and finally to some new hybrid being in which he is pronounced healthy but has to be careful, is self-employed, has a wife who works and an empty field where one day a house will be. This transformation is perfectly analogous to the transformation of Clark Kent into Superman or of a jaguar into a frog, and interestingly enough in this case offers a near perfect mediation of opposing and incompatible situations, a mediation

of the type so significant in the work on myth of Lévi-Strauss.

In the explanation so far one important element in the narrative model has been omitted – the test. Within the logic of Greimas's model and the synchrony already discussed the test provides the dynamic and the diachronic element. Logically this is the result of the test's functional composition. There are three basic elements $(A_{1,2,3})$ which signify the offer and acceptance of the challenge, $(F_{1,2,3})$, the struggle and its successful completion, and (non $c_{1,2,3}$), its consequence. This, the final element, is the only unpaired function in the entire scheme; through it, as it were, the narrative tips over, and a new balance is established.

There are three tests each corresponding to one axis of communication and in order of appearance they are:

1. *The qualifying test* $(A_2 \ F_2 \ \text{non} \ c_2)$ provides or fails to provide the ' hero ' with the power to complete his task, power that has been removed by ⸱ deception practised on, and submitted to, by the ' hero ' in⸱ ⸱itial situation and restored by the receipt of the ' magical agent ' on the successful conclusion of this test.

2. *The main test* $(A_1 \ F_1 \ \text{non} \ c_3)$ provides or fails to provide the object of search, the satisfaction of the ' hero's ' desire. Non c_3 at the conclusion of this test indicates the liquidation of the lack, or the redemption of the villainy.

3. *The glorifying test* $(A_3 \ F_3 \ \text{non} \ c_1)$. This follows the main test and provides or fails to provide evidence that the ' hero ' is truly a hero and not a villain in disguise. The test involves the knowledge or recognition of the hero and it is linked to the deprivation of that knowledge or recognition in the initial situation.

A further structure is presented in terms of the journeys of the hero $(\overline{\text{non } p_1} : \overline{p_1} :: \text{non } p_1 : p_1)$.

The first of the two following tables attempts a summary and indicates the correspondence between Greimas's and Propp's notation (cf *Sémantique structurale,* op cit, p 203); the second presents an analysis of Episode Six applying Greimas's scheme.

Propp and Greimas: Correlation of Functions

	Greimas	Propp	
	$\overline{p}$	β?	Departure (it is not clear of whom).
Rupture of the Order and Alienation	$\overline{A}$	$\gamma\delta$	The violation of a prohibition: the breaking of the contract $\overline{(a : \text{non } a)}$.
	$\overline{C_1}$	$\epsilon\zeta$	Reconnaissance and receipt of information $\overline{(c_1 : \text{non } c_1)}$.
	$\overline{C_2}$	$\eta\theta$	Deceit (practised): deception (submitted to) $\overline{(c_2 : \text{non } c_2)}$.
	$\overline{C_3}$	Aa	Villainy: lack $\overline{(c_3 : \text{non } c_3)}$.
	p	?	Arrival (presumably of the villain).

	A_1	BC	The establishment of the new contract, the fulfilment of which, strictly its sealing, is the task of the narrative. The mediation (the connective incident): consent to counteraction (a: non a).
	$\overline{p_1}$	↑	Departure of the hero.
The Qualifying Test	A_2	D E	Establishment of the contract prior to the qualifying test: Propp's first function of the donor and the reaction of the hero, which overlaps
	F_2		with F_2, success.
	non c_2	F	Receipt of the ' magical agent '.
	$\dfrac{d}{\text{non } p_1}$ }	G	Rapid journey; the arrival of the hero at the place of combat.
The Main Test	F_1	HI	Combat and victory.
	c_1	J	The branding.
	non c_3	K	The liquidation of the lack.
	$\genfrac{}{}{0pt}{}{\text{non } p_1}{d}$ }		Rapid departure.
	F_1	?Pr/Rs	Pursuit and rescue of the hero.
	p_1		Arrival.
The Glorifying Test	A_3	M	Assignment of the new and difficult task.
	F_3	N	Its solution.
	non c_1	Q	The recognition of the hero as hero.
Reintegration and the Reimposition of Order	C_2	TEx	Transfiguration of the hero: recognition of the traitor (false hero) (c_2 : non c_2).
	C_3	UW	Punishment of the villain: marriage of the hero (c_3 : non c_3).
	A	BC	The NEW CONTRACT.
	non c_3	K	The reaffirmation of the liquidation of the lack.

Intimate Strangers, Episode Six:
Greimasian Analysis

$\overline{A}$	The drink. Symbolic of, and essentially a summary of Harry's relations with the world. Also a specific violation of a specific prohibition.

A_2 F_2 $\overline{(C_3)}$ non $c_2(\cdots)$	The failure in the relationship. Harry is denied the power to affect his circumstances. He remains without support. ($\overline{C_3}$ – the lack of relationship.)
$\overline{C_1}$	At work. The reconnaissance and receipt of information.
$\overline{C_3}$	Announcement of lack/villainy.
A_1	The acceptance of the challenge by Harry (A_1) – not yet a new contract, strictly.
A_2 $\left\{\begin{array}{l}\overline{C_1}\\ \overline{C_2}(?)\\ \overline{C_3}\end{array}\right.$ F_2 non $c_2(-)$	A question of double functionality. A_2F_2 non c_2 indicates a repetition of the first qualifying test, with the same result. That and the diary incident imply that Joan, momentarily, plays the villain. In other words, the link recognised equally in the Proppian an: of reconnaissance, deceit and villainy.
A_2F_2 non c_2	Kenyon. A successful encounter. It is through Kenyon's intercession that Harry is given the *power* to transform his position.
A_2F_2 non c_2 $(+/-)$	Kate's complex, but ultimately neutral involvement in what is only another qualifying test.
F_1 non c_3	Combat and victory: the liquidation of the lack. The contract for the printing has been signed, but ...
A_3 $F_3(-)$ non $c_1(-)$ non $c_3(-)$	The glorifying test: to establish the hero's rightful title. Harry fails it. He is not recognised (he becomes momentarily the villain) – and with the result (non $c_3(-)$) the lack is reinstated (no work – no relationship).
p_1	He arrives home (in the dark).
F_1 non $c_3(-)$ $\begin{array}{l}A_2\\ F_2\\ \text{non } c_2(-)\end{array}$	The hero is unrecognised. The double functionality again. Joan and Harry's first confrontation is in the nature of both the *last* qualifying test (the generation of power in the relationship) and also a second main test, associated with the lack of relationship. The A associated with this lack is implicit (ie he has not stated his willingness to undertake the reparation of the relationship). It is assumed that he wants to.

$C_1(-)$ (?)	The branding: 'the failure' not removed. 37
$C_2(-)$	His revelation as a non-hero (without power).
$C_3(-)$	His ' negative ' marriage : his punishment.
$A\ (-)$	The maintenance of the contract (with the world).
non $c_3(-)$	The lack not liquidated.
$\overline{A}$	The violation of all the norms of responsible manhood. We have now reached a new re-affirmation of an initial situation of aliena-tion (a *cultural* heart attack).
$\overline{P}$	Next morning : Harry's departure.
$\overline{C_1}$	He seeks out Joan: and they question each o. knowledge).
$\overline{C_3}$	They reveal the nature of the lack (goods/desire).
$\overline{C_2}$	They discover to some extent, the existence of their own self-deception (power).
A_1	The contract presented.
$A_2\ F_2$ non c_2	The first joint qualifying test for Kate. Sup-port given. They are encouraged to press ahead.

In taking the two tables together, a number of points can be made:

1. It is clearly not surprising to find that Greimas's notation fits the narrative of Episode Six. Given its close correspondence to that of Propp, it would be surprising if it did not. The basic *form* of the tale has been defined by Propp, and Greimas, in accepting it, prob-ably gives it greater universality than Propp ever intended.

2. However this initial correspondence is not, as has been argued, the end but the beginning of a new analysis. The difference in notation is significant: Propp's $\alpha \rightarrow W$ indicates a chronological analysis; Greimas's $\overline{A} \rightarrow A$ suggests a logical theory. There is all the difference in the world between a line and a structure.

3. The notation indicating the structure in Episode Six is relatively devoid of meaning. Greimas tells us in describing the model of the existence of the contract and of the axes of communication. He also includes in it references to journeys, but the specific semantic content has still to be indicated. This is the next task which has yet to be completed.

4. The issues that have been discussed are most clearly revealed in the particular episode chosen, Episode Six. The other episodes

which have been analysed are more often problematical and occa-
sionally recalcitrant. However there is no evidence, yet, from these
analyses to challenge the suggested relevance of this approach to
the television message.

Summary and Conclusion

It is hoped that the conjunction of overlapping types of analysis
here presented will provide the first step on the way both to a
recognition of the complexity of the television message and a
method for an approach to it. The crucial element of the text's
semanticity remains, of course, to be explained, but it is hoped
that this will be, at least in part, possible.

The incorporation of Metz's approach into the analysis indicates
the possibility of establishing the similarities and differences
between one visual/aural me   and another, and also the possi-
bility of making distinctions at the level of the signifier, between
one style of television making and another. In conjunction with
analysis of the signified certain levels of difference in the text can
be identified and one aspect of the dynamic in the narrative, that
of the non-coincidence of the units of the signifier with those of
the signified, can be defined.

The Proppian classification also indicates the possibility of estab-
lishing the similarities and the differences between one type of
narrative and another. It seems possible to suggest the inclusion
of television narrative, at least this particular example of it, within
the universality of narrative as discussed by Propp, Greimas and
Bremond. Again the similarities and differences between the narra-
tives of the Russian folktale and those of twentieth-century British
television are significant in themselves.

The inclusion of Greimas indicates the possibility of a semantic
analysis of the text, the placing of it within a set of meanings
available in a particular culture and the comparison of those mean-
ings and of their structure between cultures. In one sense the
problems are only just beginning.

Credits: Intimate Strangers: Episode Six
Transmitted by London Weekend Television, 9.00 pm, October 25,
1974. *Script* – Julian Bond. *Theme music* – Christopher Gunning.
Design – Andrew Drummond. *Producer* – Richard Bates. *Director* –
Jim Goddard. *Leading Players* – Anthony Bate (*Harry Paynter*),
Patricia Lawrence (*Joan Paynter*), Diana Mercer (*Kate Paynter*),
Ken Wynne (*Paul Foster*), David Horovitch (*Stephen Kenyon*),
Michael Tarn (*Dale*), Alan Dudley (*Churchwarden*). 52 minutes.

Preparatory section

α	initial situation
β	absentation
γ	interdiction
δ	violation
ε	reconnaissance
ʃ	information received
η	deceit
θ	submission to deceit

A		villainy
a		lack/insufficiency
B		mediation
	B²	dispatch
	B⁴	announcement of misfortune
C		consent ɪ , ɪteraction
↑		departure of the hero from home
D		the first function of the donor
E		reaction of the hero
F		the receipt of a magical agent
G		transference to a designated place: guidance
H		struggle with the villain
I		victory over the villain
J		branding or marking of the hero
K		liquidation of the lack
↓		return of the hero
Pr		pursuit of the hero
Rs		rescue of the hero
o		unrecognised arrival
L		claims of a false hero
M		difficult task
N		solution of the difficult task
Q		recognition of the hero
Ex		exposure of the false hero
T		transfiguration
U		punishment of the false hero or villain
W		wedding, accession to the throne

§	connective

The 31 functions exclude α and § and count A and a as one.
Apart from B, which is a diffuse category, all functions have been
noted only by their main headings in the *Morphology of the Folk-
tale*. These are the classifications which accord Propp's analysis

40 its generality; within each of these individual functions there may be as many as 19 variations which, of course, will be significantly more specific to the Russian folktales Propp used for his analysis.

Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu[1]

Kristin Thompson
David Bordwell

The surviving films of Ozu Yasujiro, being only gradually introduced
to Western audiences, are already ʰⁿⁱ⁻ comfortably assimilated as
noble, conservative works. Young ʃ ...ese directors seem to con-
sider Ozu's films old-fashioned, while English-language critics praise
their ' beautiful ' stories of traditional Japanese family situations.
Yet Ozu's films can most productively be read as modernist, inno-
vative works. Because no rigorous critical analysis has been per-
formed upon Ozu's films (in English), we propose to make a first
step by using a method adapted from Russian Formalist poetics.
In ' On Literary Evolution ', Tynyanov writes, ' A work is correlated
with a particular literary system depending on its deviation, its
" difference " as compared with the literary system with which it is
confronted ' (L Matejka and K Pomorska, eds: *Readings in Russian
Poetics,* Cambridge, Mass 1971, p 72). In this article we shall
situate Ozu's work against a paradigm of ' classical Hollywood
cinema '. We have chosen to utilise the paradigm for several
reasons: the entity it names coincides intuitively with our familiar
sense of what ' a film ' is; the paradigm has been explicitly codified
by many of its practitioners (eg the host of ' rule-books ' on
' technique '); and the style of the paradigm has, historically,
become a pervasive ' ordinary usage ' of the cinema. A background
set consisting of this paradigm throws into relief certain stylistic
alternatives present in Ozu's films. Though we plan in subsequent

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1. Many of the ideas in this article were first presented in several
   courses at the University of Wisconsin between Summer 1974 and
   Summer 1975. The authors wish to thank Maureen Turim, David
   Van Dyck and others for suggestions and information which aided
   in this research, and also New Yorker Films, and especially Jose
   Lopez and Sandra Kohlenberg, for enabling us to study many of
   Ozu's films.

research to examine other stylistic aspects, we shall in this essay concentrate upon the relation between space and narrative logic (considered as the cause-effect chain and any parallels or transformations which may be present). Seen against the background of the classical paradigm, the modernity of Ozu's work involves the use of specific spatial devices which challenge the supremacy of narrative causality.

I

In the classical paradigm, the system for constructing space (the 'continuity style') has as its aim the subordination of spatial (and temporal) structures to the logic of the narrative, especially to the cause/effect chain. Negatively, the space is presented so as not to distract attention from the dominant actions; positively, the space is 'used up' by the presentation of narratively important settings, character traits ('psychology'), or other causal agents. Space as *space* is rendered subordinate to space as a *site for action* through several specific procedures, four of which are pertinent to this study.

1. *Concentration on specific spatial points seen as the*
   loci of the drar ·
In the classical ¸ ·igm, such points are usually the characters themselves; less oï ·ı, significant features of décor or objects. In both cases, the positioning of the camera is motivated wholly by the narrative dominant. In addition, to heighten the concentration upon the speaking character or the significant object, backgrounds will be thrown out of focus.

2. *The 180-degree rule*
This minimises the spatial disorientation over cuts; if the spectator's position vis-à-vis the action is always clear, he or she will be able to follow the action in a continuous flow, without pausing to search the screen for clues as to the new spatial relations of the shot. Maintaining the 180-degree rule guarantees that the background space of the scene will not change to any great extent; shots 1 and 2 will share a roughly common background – that area which is on the other side of the axis of action from the camera. Thus the cut will not provide a new space to be examined, which might then distract from the scene's action. (Similarly, the thirty-degree rule avoids 'jumps' at the cuts resulting from too little change in the camera position; such jumps create unwarranted intrusions by space into the smooth flow of action.) In the 180-degree system, the match on action makes the cut virtually 'invisible' and guarantees the greatest link between the action from shot to shot, since there is no break at all; here space is reduced

to its minimum significance, and the dominant action retains all
attention. By a combination of these spatial rules for cutting, the
.films of the classical paradigm create a space which is almost
' unnoticeable ' − ie easily ' legible ' − because it is always moti-
vated by the ongoing cause/effect chain of the narrative.

3. *Space and objects as externalisation of character traits*
Objects will not be present unless: (a) they will be ' used ' for
verisimilitude or as ' props ', or (b) they reveal something about
the characters. The opening scene of *The Maltese Falcon*
provides a brief example. Spade is identified by the ' Spade and
Archer ' sign on his window; this sign is important because it will
be changed to ' Samuel Spade ' on the death of Archer. Spade is
characterised by his tobacco ('Dependable ' brand) as soon as
we see him. The second desk exists to emphasise Archer and later
Spade's responsibility to avenge him; the sofa is there for the
captain who delivers the falcon to die upon and the filing cabinets
for Joel Cairo to search. Every object presented is ' used up ' by
the narrative by the time the film is over (the ' Falcon ' itself being
the most obvious example).

4. *General but not exact continuity of graphic configurations*
The lighting levels of a scc ' will tend to remain roughly the same
throughout, so that the. ' will not create abrupt contrasts.
Compositions are varied wiḷ_ṇ a few basic patterns. The dominant
action will tend to occur centre screen (hence the frequent refram-
ings in films of the classical paradigm). The spectator is certainly
not asked to scan the screen to discover the action; space would
then come to the foreground, overwhelming the dominant action
(as happens, say, in the films of Tati). If two or more characters
or actions are present, they will be carefully balanced in the frame.
Above all, attention is not called to the screen surface *as such*, as
excessively precise graphic continuity would.

These codes within the Hollywood paradigm create a ' closed '
space which is subordinate to the narrative. In *Theory of Film
Practice* (London 1973, p 11), Noël Burch calls this procedure the
' zero point of cinematic style ', because the film-maker declines to
use spatial (and temporal) elements as parameters in themselves.
Instead space (like time) is deployed to lay out the causal connec-
tions of the story, which remain paramount at all times.

II
Given the classical paradigm as a background comparison, we may
see how Ozu's films construct a very different system for handling
space and narrative logic. As in the films of most directors who

have refused the continuity style, the devices Ozu consistently employs form as rigorous an approach as that of Hollywood.

First, however, it is necessary to suggest the limitations of our study. General opinion to the contrary, all Ozu films are not ' the same '. While certain general stylistic principles seem to recur throughout Ozu's career, each film also works on a distinct formal system which cannot be accounted for by generalisations. Close analyses of the individual films are still needed to discover the unique aspects of each. We do not here attempt to characterise Ozu's works exhaustively; rather we hope to lay out several general principles that do carry over consistently through his films, thereby preparing the way for more detailed study. This article is based upon multiple viewings of the following films: *I Was Born, But . . .* (1932), *Passing Fancy* (1933), *A Story of Floating Weeds* (1934), *The Only Son* (1936), *There was a Father* (1942), *The Record of a Tenement Gentleman* (1947), *Late Spring* (1949), *Early Summer* (1951), *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* (1952), *Tokyo Story* (1953), *Early Spring* (1956), *Tokyo Twilight* (1957), *Equinox Flower* (1958), *Good Morning* (1959), *Floating Weeds* (1959), *Late Autumn* (1960), *The End of Summer* (1961) and *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962).

The most common description of Ozu's construction of space is the erroneous claim that his shots are always from a low camera angle. In fact, his films *usually* use a low camera *height* (that is, lower than the subject photographed). When the subject is a baby, as in *The Only Son,* the ᴧmera may rest on the ground. With seated adults, the camera to be at chest height; with standing adults, at about waist height or lower. Long shots of interiors are typically from a lower height than medium shots; long shots of exteriors (buildings, landscapes) are frequently filmed from an inde-terminate height that usually remains low in relation to the subject. But in all these cases, the camera is seldom tilted more than a few degrees out of the horizontal plane, yielding an almost straight-on angle in most shots; the floor in most long shots is quite as visible as the ceiling and upper walls. Yet even though most of Ozu's shots can be characterised in this way, his camera position is not invariable. He has many low and high angles in his films. The tele-phone pole in *I Was Born, But . . .*, the baseball stadium lights in *An Autumn Afternoon,* and the shots of Tokyo taken from the cab fender in *The Only Scn* are a few examples of low angles. Similarly, the high angles down on the harbour that open and close *Tokyo Story* are by no means unique in Ozu's work; high angles are used occasionally in long shots over landscapes. Most important, what must be noticed is the ' background ' function of Ozu's dominant camera position. Precisely because they are so readily apparent and so consistent, the low camera height and straight-on angle act as a stylistic norm. Against these extremely limited variables, the film ' foregrounds ' other aspects of space. As we shall see, certain

spatial devices are made more emphatic when camera angle and
height remain constant.

Speaking generally, Ozu's films diverge from the Hollywood paradigm in that they generate spatial structures which are not motivated by the cause/effect chain of the narrative. In the terms of Boris Tomashevsky's 'Thematics' (*Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1965, pp 78-87), Ozu's most radical uses of space lack both 'compositional' motivation (ie motivation according to narrative economy) and 'realistic' motivation (ie motivation according to canons of verisimilitude); the motivation is purely 'artistic'. Space, constructed alongside and sometimes against the cause/effect sequence, becomes 'foregrounded' to a degree that renders it at times the primary structural level of the film (as in opera, when the text is superseded, overridden by autonomous musical structures). More specifically, in all the films we have seen, such 'foregrounded' spatial structures are generated through an interplay of dominants and overtones (in Eisenstein's sense – see David Bordwell: 'Eisenstein's Epistemological Shift', *Screen* v 15 n 4, Winter 1974/5, pp 36-7). At times spaces with only the most tenuous tive associations (and *no* place in the cause/effect chain) are dominant (ie compositionally salient); narrative elements may enter these spaces as overtones. At other times the narrative may be the dominant, as in a dialogue scene, but spatial elements continue to function as overtones. For example, the first shot of *Good Morning* shows several electrical towers dominating the composition; behind them the roofs of the apartment houses are visible at the bottom of the frame (an overtone of narrative significance, since this is the locale for most of the action). The second shot presents the apartment houses now filling two-thirds of the screen, with the towers visible against the sky beyond them; the apartments have become the dominant and the towers recede into the position of an overtone. But this does not mark the beginning of the narrative action. Ozu then cuts to a shot down the passageway between several rows of apartment buildings; the towers are no longer visible – just the grassy hill at the end of the passage. There follows a cut to a position closer to the end. The apartments are still dominant, but the grass has become somewhat more prominent. Finally, Ozu cuts to a shot with the grass filling the lower half of the screen and four schoolboys walking along it, silhouetted against the sky that fills the top half. The dialogue among these boys will comprise the first scene, which begins after a cut in closer. Space is moved through by means of an interweaving of dominant elements and overtones, coming to prominence or receding from shot to shot. Given the possibility of such spatial play, narrative linearity need no longer provide the core of the film's structure. Narrative causality is relegated to the status of only one 'voice' in a polyphony that gives an equal role to purely spatial manipulations. Let us outline several principles

whereby space is constructed in Ozu's films. We shall then have the means to consider more specifically how these devices, in this sometimes dissonant polyphony, contest narrative supremacy.

1. *Intermediate spaces*
Again and again in Ozu's films we find a short series of shots of landscapes, empty rooms, or other actionless spaces, usually between scenes of characters' actions. We can hardly consider these mere ' establishing shots ' in the classical Hollywood usage, since many of them are more confusing than orienting; using as many as six, seven, or more shots to establish a locale hardly accords with the classical conception of narrative economy.

Instead, these shots may ⊢⌐ seen as one aspect of Ozu's interest in the *spaces between p⌐*   *of narrative action* − intermediate spaces. John Huston woul⌐.⌐'t think of cutting away from Sam Spade and Brigid O'Shaughnessey to a shot of the coat-rack in the corner of the office unless the hats on it had some significance (eg in the unravelling of the enigma). Yet in *There Was a Father,* Ozu does cut to a coat-rack to begin a sequence in a go-parlour, without ever drawing the hats or the space of the rack into the narrative action. What are the techniques Ozu uses to construct these intermediate spaces?

A common device until his late period was a play with *focus.* The dramatic dominant will sometimes be thrown out of focus, while an overtone of the space of the shot will be quite sharply visible. Several striking examples occur in the films of the mid-1930's. After the father has brought Harue to the café in *Passing Fancy,* there is a title as a character asks, ' She can stay, but will there be any trouble? ' A medium shot of Harue seated in the café follows, then a medium shot of the father, with a wooden barrel to the right of the screen. The next cut shifts the camera with the barrel acting as a pivot: the barrel remains in almost the same position in the frame, but now Harue is visible, out of focus, in the background. The father passes in front of the camera from behind the barrel and goes out of frame left. Ozu then holds the shot for several seconds, with the barrel at the right in perfect focus and all the background elements, including Harue, out of focus. Similarly in *The Only Son,* the son and his wife sit talking about how to entertain his mother in Tokyo; they are in the background, out of focus, framed by a doorway. In the room in the foreground, the mother's pillow and bed are in sharp focus. Several shots later Ozu cuts back to a similar but not identical set-up, and now the pillow, still prominent in the foreground, has become an out-of-focus overtone, and the couple is in focus.[2] *The Record of a*

2. Noël Burch has astutely pointed this out in *Theory of Film Practice,* op cit, p 54. We expect his forthcoming book on Japanese cinema will complement our argument in this essay.

Tenement Gentleman achieves a similar effect with rack focus. The
fortune teller and his friend come back from a neighbourhood
gathering; the shot shows the interior of their house, the door in
the background out of focus, a tea-kettle in the foreground in
focus. The men are seen through the window and door, but it is
only after they have come into the house (several seconds after
they have entered the frame) before refocussing brings the action
into sharp view. Although Ozu used this technique less in his later
films, there is still an example of rack focus in *Tokyo Twilight*, and
the man who introduces Hirayama at the wedding in *Equinox
Flower* is seen out of focus in the background of the subsequent
medium shot of Hirayama. But for the most part the long shots of
Ozu's late films keep all sections of even the most cluttered sets
in focus; here colour larr   assumes the function of calling atten-
tion to spaces away froi ι ιe dominant action.

Ozu's Agfacolor stock in these films allows him to create a
subtle range of colours against which certain bright elements stand
out markedly. Sometimes these foregrounded colours relate to the
narrative events of the scene, but just as often they function to
draw the eye to narratively insignificant space. Reds particularly
function in this way; the repeated use of red objects in *Equinox
Flower* provides an illustration. Several times the appearance of
a red sweater outside the Hirayamas' home is linked by association
to the marriage motif. The young lady from Kyoto speaks to Hira-
yama about her mother's determination to marry her off. The
colours are rather muted until she asks, ' Did she speak about my
marriage? ' Just before the line, Ozu cuts to a set-up of her not
previously used in the scene; now a red sweater hanging on a line
outside is just visible in the upper right-hand section of the screen.
This sets up an overtone which returns later at a key point in the
narrative when the wife discovers her husband will go to visit his
daughter, whose marriage he had objected to. As the wife sits
happily on a chair in the hallway, Ozu cuts to a medium shot of
her, and again a red shirt is barely visible hanging on a line in the
upper left section of the screen. As the music swells for a transition,
Ozu cuts to a line of flapping clothes with a red shirt in the centre.
A coloured object, repeated as an overtone, finally comes forward
as a dominant; in every instance the space the object occupies is
removed from the space of the action, until, in the last shot des-
cribed, the action is no longer present – non-narrative space has
come forward. In other scenes in the film, however, red sweaters
are used without relating to the narrative action. Several transi-
tional series contain shots in which young women (not characters)
walk past in red sweaters. The Hirayamas' bright red teapot also
figures prominently in the mise-en-scène. During several transitions
into the house it is the dominant visual element, while in several
conversation scenes its presence serves partially to distract the
eye from the action and lead it to space insignificant to the cause-

effect chain. (For a more detailed analysis of the spatial uses of the colour red in *Equinox Flower*, see Edward Branigan's article elsewhere in this issue.) Similar examples of colour used to draw attention to intermediate spaces can be found in all Ozu's late films: variously coloured teapots, plastic tubs, towels, and bottles are among the objects that repeatedly perform this function.

Focus and colour act within shots, but various editing devices also construct space between points. Within scenes Ozu sometimes employs *cutaways* – not to significant narrative elements as in films of the classical paradigm, but to spaces just beyond the periphery of the action. From the funeral dinner in *Tokyo Story* there is a cut to a shot from the porch overlooking the water to the town beyond; two large paper lanterns hang at the top of the frame. In the reunion scene in *Equinox Flower*, Ozu shows a series of medium shots of the assembled men as one of them, Mikami, chants an old military p   n the middle of the chanting, the following series of four shots occurs: 1. Medium shots of Mikami, chanting; 2. Medium shot of Hirayama, listening; 3. Long shot of the exterior of the inn (chanting continues off); and 4. Medium shot as 1 of Mikami chanting. From here the scene goes on a few minutes before it ends. The cutaway is the only one of its kind in the film and provokes the expectation of a transition until the cut back inside.

Although this passage from *Equinox Flower* simply moves to a space away from the dominant action, many of Ozu's cutaways function as ellipses within a scene. One such cutaway which demonstrates a daring play with space (and time) occurs in *The Only Son*. The mother and son go to visit the latter's former teacher, who now runs a café in Tokyo. He washes his face as he prepares to talk with them. As he finishes he asks, ' Isn't there a towel around? ' Ozu then cuts to an exterior shot of a working-class neighbourhood with hanging laundry. This is followed by a shot across a field to two large storage tanks (one of the shirts from the previous shot just visible as an overtone in the upper left corner), then a low-angle shot of the flapping sign of the café (which we have already seen as the mother and son arrived). The next shot is an interior, showing kitchen utensils and bottles; cut from this to a long shot of the three people seated in another room talking. The former teacher has now changed clothes, indicating that an ellipsis of a few minutes has been covered by the series of cutaway shots outside the building. Other examples of cutting to ' empty ' locales to cover time lapses can be found in *Early Spring*, where Ozu cuts to empty rooms or shots of the husband's suits hanging on hooks, and in *Tokyo Story*, in which Ozu cuts together series of shots of unoccupied rooms where action will occur *later* (note the shot of the desk where the boy is *not* studying, but will study in a subsequent shot).

Between scenes, Ozu often employs his famous *transitional*

series of shots. The great variety Ozu achieves in these transitions cannot be detailed here, but a careful observation of these devices reveals that Ozu can use anything from a straight cut without music to a lengthy series of six or more shots with extended music over, in moving from scene to scene. It is not the case, however, that the intermediate spaces in such transitions are wholly alien to the sites of the narrative action. Usually the transitional spaces are contiguous with scenographic space, presenting locales near or adjacent to the area of the upcoming scene. The productive features of these spaces are their quantity and patterning. Such shots present, first of all, a surplus; their number exceeds the rules of economy which the classical paradigm assigns to the establishing shot. Secondly the succession of these shots makes the spatial elements of the
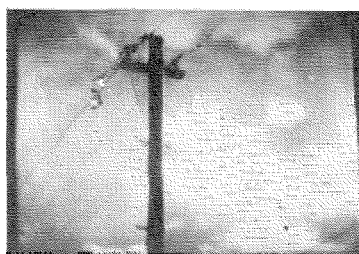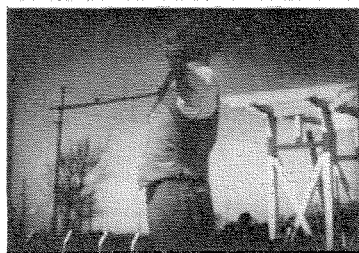

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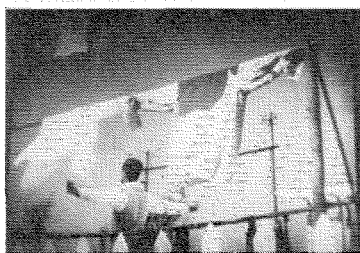
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transition ' bleed ' gradually into the scene through the interplay of dominants and overtones. Here we will deal with those transitions which move into and out of the scenes through spaces contiguous to or distinct from the cause-effect chain.

An example typical of the ' trick ' transitions Ozu seems to have employed often in his early films occurs in *I Was Born, But. . . .* As one scene ends, the boys and their father are walking along a road, the camera tracking with them. As they pass the base of a telephone pole (Still 1), Ozu cuts to a low angle shot of the top of what is presumably the same pole (Still 2). After a title, ' Morning ', the next shot (Still 3) shows several shirts stretched out on a line to dry, with a number of telephone poles visible in the rear. The father is seen between the shirts, stretching his arms out in his exercises; his posture echoes the shape of the shirts. A cut takes

us to a medium shot of the father, with telephone poles still in the background (Still 4), and the action of the scene begins. The indirectness of such cutting arises from the overlapping of dominants and overtones from shot to shot; though the spaces so linked may or may not be shown as contiguous, the presence of at least one similar element from shot to shot creates the ' oblique ' entry to the scene's space. (Note that the title interrupts this overlap of dominants and overtones. This device is an unsure one; in later films, such transitions are handled without expository indicators of this type. Without the title, it would be unclear whether the telephone pole top seen in the low angle shot is that of the earlier scene or one of those in the subsequnt scene. As we shall see in other examples, an ambiguous, ' open ' cutting pattern in the transitions is more typical of Ozu's films.)

Several years later Ozu used an even more indirect cutting pattern to arrive at the narrative space in the opening scene of *The Only Son*. The film's first shot is taken from inside an unidentified building which is never established as functioning in the narrative of the film; the camera faces out of a window onto the street, with an oil lamp hanging prominently in the window. Cut to a shot along the street, a lantern in close-up hanging into the frame from the upper right (either another identical lantern or the same one cheated away from the window frame); women carrying bundles enter frame left and move down the street away from the camera. In the next shot the visual elements divide the screen in half vertically: to the left, the women can still be seen moving in the same screen direction, now out of focus, and to the right is a wall with a sign establishing the silk factory the mother works in. The next shot shows the interior of the factory with women at work; cut to a medium shot of the mother at work, her face almost obscured by the steam. But the action does not begin here; after another shot along the turning wheels of the factory, Ozu cuts to a country-side with trees and a house in extreme long shot. This is followed by an interior shot of a cluster of vases, plants, chicks, and another oil lamp. Cut from this to a medium shot of the mother turning a grindstone, and the scene begins. In the classical paradigm, a sign would immediately establish the factory, followed by at least a short dialogue inside the factory. Ozu's approach brings in causally insignificant space and leaves the relations between the locales unclear.

The transition into the scene in which the grandparents wait at the train station to return home in *Tokyo Story* is typical of Ozu's later films. The scene begins with a low-angle shot of a flip-over train schedule-board above a door. Ozu then cuts back to a longer shot with several clocks and schedule-boards visible, including the one already seen; now a rectangular light fixture in the ceiling is visible; cut to another part of the station, with a similar light fixture and clocks in the background — but now the dominant

element is a group of people waiting in the foreground. These
people are not the characters of the story, however; the *next* shot
presents the characters but now eliminates the clocks and lights.

The most transgressive transition we have seen occurs in *An
Autumn Afternoon*. The first scene is a dialogue in which the
protagonist, Hirayama, tries to persuade his firend Kawai to have
dinner with him and a third friend. Kawai persistently declines,
insisting he must go to a baseball game. Their dialogue continues
off, over a shot of Hirayama's desk and the windows beyond. The
typical transition music of the late films comes up before the cut,
which reveals the huge floodlights of a baseball stadium at twilight.
The baseball announcer's voice is heard over a loudspeaker, which
continues over two other shots of other floodlight fixtures. Then
Ozu cuts to a straight-on medium shot of a television in an interior,
the baseball game being broadcast and the announcer's voice con-
tinuing. Cut from this to a shot of four unknown men watching
the TV, now visible at the extreme right of the frame. The next
shot is taken from down a corridor of the restaurant; the men are
now seen at the end of the corridor, while at the extreme left
several sets of shoes and hats are visible. Cut to a shot of Hira-
yama, Kawai, and their friend Professor Horie having dinner, Kawai
listening carefully to the progress of the game still audible from
the bar. He has in fact abandoned his plan to attend the game,
but Ozu's transition goes first to the place the character is *not*,
then to the place where he actually is. This sequence is one of the
culminations of Ozu's exercises in moving through spaces between
scenes independently of any narrative demands.

A similar example can be found in the scene in *The End of
Summer* when the daughter Noriko calls the Hirayama Clinic just
after the old man has his first attack. From a profile shot of her,
there is a cut to several shots of the *empty* clinic, then to a series
of shots of empty rooms of the family's home. Finally there is a
shot of the sickbed with doctor and nurse attending. The initial
cut to the clinic seems at first to imply either that we will see the
other end of the phone conversation or that the old man has been
moved and the next scene will take place in the clinic; Ozu then
delays the revelation of the continuation of the plot events for a
brief interval. (*The End of Summer* in general has some of the
most lengthy, indirect transitions through intermediate spaces we
have seen in Ozu's work; note particularly the long series of shots
leading into the brief dialogue scene at the bicycle races.)

Two final examples may serve to show how varied such transi-
tions may be. In *Early Summer*, Ozu sets up two simultaneous
actions: while several members of the family take the visiting
uncle to the theatre, Noriko visits the restaurant of her friend
Akiko. As the scene ends, Noriko exits down a stairway at the end
of a corridor at the restaurant. The camera, situated at the other
end of the corridor, starts to dolly forward *after* she has disap-

peared. Midway through this movement, there is a cut to an oblique dolly through the empty, darkened theatre in which we had earlier seen the family. Again the cut interrupts the movement, and there follows a shot of Noriko and the rest of the family assembled around the table at home. It should be evident by now that Ozu's films include not only the spaces between points but also spaces *before* and *after* actions occur there – after characters have left or before they have come. (This is also reflected in the

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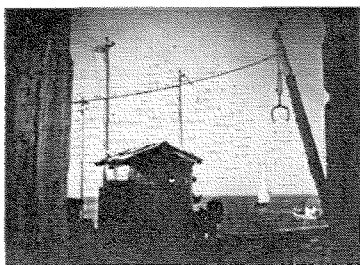
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frequent pattern of cutting to a space several seconds before anyone is present, or lingering on a space for sometimes considerable intervals after the characters exit. *The Flavour of Green Tea Over Rice* is in fact partly structured around tracking movements of the camera which take place in these actionless moments.)

One of the most striking transitions occurs in *Floating Weeds*, which presents the acting troupe's arrival by means of a host of intermediate spaces. The first four shots of the film (Stills 5-9) all show a white lighthouse in the background, juxtaposed with a

series of different objects in the foreground: a bottle, several old
ships' hulls, telephone poles and sheds, and finally a red letter box.
Over this series, the lighthouse progressively appears smaller,
gradually shifting from the dominant position to that of an over-
tone. From the lighthouse and letter box, there is a cut to the
interior of a building, with the box still visible through the window.
A dialogue scene follows in which several people unimportant to
the plot discuss the coming visit of the troupe; one of them puts
a poster for the troupe on the interior wall. From a medium shot
of this man sitting resting, there is a cut to the lighthouse, this
time juxtaposed to a single telephone pole in the foreground. Cut
to a shot along the deck of a ship; the water is not visible, so it
is difficult to say where this ship is; the next shot reveals several
members of the troupe inside the ship. A series of shots of small
groups of actors follows, then Ozu cuts back to the shot down
the ship's deck. This is followed by an extremely disorienting shot
over the side railing of the moving ship: the wooden railing is
visible at the bottom of the frame, the sky fills the top portion,
and the lighthouse is seen, so placed as to appear to slide along
the top of the railing. Again, because of the elimination of the
water from the shot, we have no reference point to give a sense
of depth which would allow us to see the lighthouse as being fixed
in the distance. Cut to a slightly different set-up on the lighthouse
and telephone pole, with the ship sailing in past the lighthouse.
Finally there is a cut to a variant on an earlier shot: the lighthouse
is still seen in the background with poles and sheds in the fore-
ground, but one of the sheds now has one of the troupe's posters
on its wall. Characteristically, Ozu has presented the wall before
and after being postered without showing the act itself; one bit of
the original intermediate space has now been taken up into the
narrative, though most remain separate. (In films of the Hollywood
paradigm, such emphasis would never be put upon a locale like the
lighthouse, unless, say, the lives of the main characters would
depend upon that lighthouse in the climactic scene of the film.)
Again, this is an extremely 'uneconomical' and oblique way to
present narrative; the result is to make certain spaces indepen-
dently dominant.

Any number of other examples can be found in Ozu's films, all
with minute variations and unique characteristics: the transitions
from the reunion to the inn at Kyoto in *Equinox Flower,* from
Onomichi to Tokyo early in *Tokyo Story,* into the mah-jongg parlour
in the initial, hesitating approach to it in *Tokyo Twilight,* and into
the many bars and restaurants of *An Autumn Afternoon.*

Through all these stylistic figures – focus, colour, cutaways, and
transitions – space becomes foregrounded. Though still usually
related to the narrative, space is no longer motivated solely by it.
The interplay of dominants and overtones of focus or colour build
a space immediately around the narrative chain, more or less con-

tiguous but not necessarily subordinate to it. More radically, the cutaways and transitions, being syntagmatically successive rather than simultaneous, interrupt causal continuity by 'wedging in' spaces which do not contribute to the unfolding narrative. What Roland Barthes calls the proairetic and hermeneutic chains, ie the sequences of events and attributes linked in the narrative causally or by their contribution to the establishment and uncovering of an enigma, are forged in part by space in the classical paradigm. In Ozu's films they are thus weakened, 'opened up' to various degrees.

In thus impeding causal continuity – sometimes only for momentary disorientation, sometimes with permanently unsettling effect – the film creates levels 'alongside' and 'against' the narrative. At one level, cutaways and transitions mark temporal ellipses: instead of drawing on non-spatial devices like dissolves or of subordinating space to an adumbrated temporal chain (as in the classical montage sequence), Ozu's films present duration through *spatial* configurations. At a more subtle level, the cutaways and transitions are usually not 'symbolic' of characters' traits, other causal forces, or narrative parallelisms. (Even the vaguely 'Ozu-like' still-life shots at the end of *Tobacco Road* yield specific meanings about the departing couple.) Rather, Ozu's cutaways and transitions usually present spaces distinct from the characters' personal projects. Finally, at the most radical level, in presenting space empty of characters – spaces around characters, locales seen before characters arrive or after they leave, or even spaces which they never traverse – Ozu's films displace the illusion of narrative presence and plenitude. A scene in *The Maltese Falcon* without Sam Spade is possible, but not a scene without any of the characters, without any causal or parallel function in the narrative. Ozu's cutaways contest the imaginary presence of 'human nature' and 'character psychology' in the system of narrative causality by structuring sections of the film around what the classical paradigm can only consider absences.

As a summary example of the disorienting potential of narrative displaced by such absences, consider the opening sequence of *Late Spring*, which involves the arrival of Noriko and then of the widow, Mrs Miwa, at a ceremony connected with the wedding of a friend; the scene ends just after the beginning of the ceremony. The sequence opens with three shots of the Kitakamakura station, where a train is about to come in, as indicated by a bell which begins to ring just before the next cut. The fourth shot is a long view of the roof of a large traditional Japanese building surrounded by trees. Cut inside to a corridor ending in the background at a room where several women are seen sitting. Noriko then enters from a door at the left and all the women bow to her and she to them. She has presumably arrived on the train heralded by the bell, but no one is seen in the shots of the station, and the time of her

walk to the building is elided by the shot of the roof. There now
follows a series of eight shots in which Noriko and her aunt talk,
Mrs Miwa arrives and the beginning of the ceremony is announced.
The next shot shows the exterior of the building with flowers and
trees seen in the background; using a progressive overlap of domi-
nant and overtones, there is a cut to a closer shot of the flowers,
now with the building in the background out of focus. A shot of
a smaller building in the grounds follows, then the next shot (the
seventeenth) returns inside to take up the ceremony, which is
now under way. Five shots comprise this particular series inside the
building, following the ceremony and the onlookers' reactions. The
scene ends by returning outside for another set-up on the flowers
and building and then a long shot of a hillside with several tall
dead trees prominent against the sky. This is followed by a
medium-long shot of Noriko's father and his assistant Hattori at
home working.

There are several disorienting aspects to this scene. The logical
connection of the railway station to the scene that follows is kept
out of sight by cutting away from Noriko's (presumed) arrival until
she is in the building already. What appears to be the key moment
of the scene – the ceremony everyone is gathered for – begins
offscreen. Finally, the ' last ' shot of the scene, the hillside, is
actually the first shot of the next, for the hill is near Noriko's
home, not near the building where the ceremony is taking place.
(This is made clear only by the repetition of shots of the hillside
later in the film, always in transitions involving Noriko's home.)
Yet the hillside also appears to be part of the first building's sur-
roundings, yielding an abrupt and ambiguous transition into the
space of the second scene.

Of the 23 shots in the scene, nine present exteriors when no one
is present. The cutaways and transitions not only elide time and
' spread out ' the cause/effect chain but also, by means of the
dominant/overtone structure, present a ' scene ' constructed as
much by relations among ' empty ' spaces as by the logic of the
narrative. In such ways, all the stylistic figures for presenting inter-
mediate spaces enter into a formal dialectic with the narrative logic.

2. 360-degree shooting space

The key to an understanding of Ozu's cutting patterns within scenes
is his eschewal of 180-degree space. Hollywood's creation of an
imaginary axis of action in each scene places the camera within a
semi-circular area; often the camera never does move to the other
semi-circle, leaving much of the space of the scene invisible, and
limiting our vantage point on what is shown. Ozu's space conceives
of the shooting area as consisting of 360 degrees – circular rather
than semi-circular. Four shots may show the four walls of a room
with no attention to screen direction. We should emphasise that

Ozu is not *breaking* an existing line; he has constructed a spatial system which is a complete alternative to the continuity style.

The absence of an axis of action is so pervasive in Ozu's films that virtually any ' action ' scene provides examples. In *Early Summer,* one medium shot shows Mamiya, the doctor, and his assistant at a worktable: the shot is almost a profile view, with the men facing screen right; in the background is a door which is to their left. Ozu then cuts to a long shot of a nurse entering and standing in front of a door which is to their *right*; the men are now partially visible on the left, facing left. The camera has been placed on the other side of the men for the second shot, at a position facing almost 180 degrees from the previous set-up. In *An Autumn Afternoon,* after Kawai and Hirayama have brought their old teacher ' the Gourd ' home drunk, Ozu presents several shots of ' the Gourd ' and his daughter. One is a long shot, with ' the Gourd ' in profile at the left, seated bent over on a stool, facing right. His daughter stands just to the right of centre, facing front; the entrance to the shop can be seen behind her. There follows a 180-degree cut to a medium shot of the old man, now seen in profile facing left. The back of the shop is now visible behind him. Clearly this is a situation in which any continuity-oriented director would use shot-reverse-shot.

I Was Born, But . . . offers a more complex instance in the first scene, where the father stands waiting for a train to pass. One medium shot shows a frontal view of the father from the waist up; the striped train guard post is being lowered in front of him and slants from upper left to lower right. The next shot is a medium shot from behind the father, from the waist to the knees; the guard rail now slants slightly up towards the right as it comes down. Later in the scene, we see a low-angle shot of the guard rails up, slanting from lower left to upper right. The father is no longer visible. Next Ozu cuts about ninety degrees to a long shot of the train, which is disappearing down the track. The cuts create a different background in each shot and thus a certain degree of discontinuity.

But such cutting is not completely disorienting; if it were, space would wholly overwhelm the narrative. Typically the films provide *spatial anchors* which situate the audience in relation to the constantly shifting backgrounds. One favourite Ozu device is to have one character's feet protruding into the frame. In *I Was Born, But . . .,* the boys eat their lunch seated in a field. One series of four shots alternates medium views of the two boys, and each shot has the feet of the offscreen boy in a lower corner. A similar device is used in *Floating Weeds*; the actors are sitting about in the upper room of the theatre. One long shot (Still 10) presents an old actor seated to the left of the frame, his legs stretched out towards the right; the boy and the troupe leader's mistress are seen beyond him. Cut to a shot (Still 11) of three actors playing a

game in front of an open window, with the old actor's legs still
visible, now stretching into the frame from the right. These legs
cue us that the actors are on the other side of the same room. The


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same film provides another, more extended example of spatial
anchoring; it opens with a shot (Still 12) looking towards the door
or a barber's shop, identified by a little striped emblem on the
window; a barber's chair is visible at the left. Cut to a medium
shot (Still 13) of the barber's daughter shaving a customer who
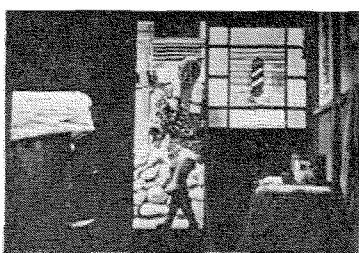faces right; the rear wall of the shop is now visible, and the empty
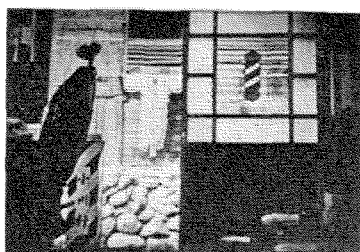

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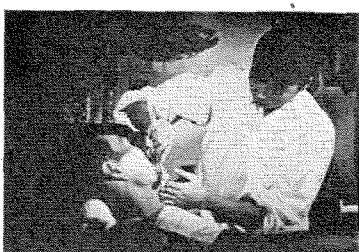
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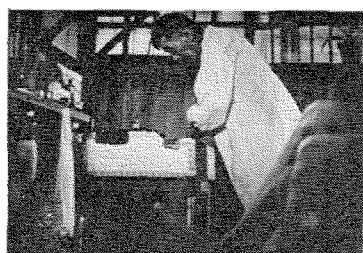
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chair we had seen in the previous shot is now to the right in the
foreground. Ozu then cuts to a medium-long shot (Still 14) of the
barber himself, seen against another front window of the shop. The
legs of the customer being shaved are now in the foreground; he
faces left. Finally Ozu cuts back to a shot (Still 15) similar to the
first, but now the chair is behind a wall; only the barber's-shop
emblem is visible. An actor comes in and the scene begins. This

complex sequence, each shot with the camera facing in exactly the opposite direction from adjoining shots, forces the spectator to pay attention to space itself or become lost.

Ozu also frequently uses signs as pivots to move about in space. Many restaurant and bar scenes begin with one or more shots of a sign-filled street, then cut to interior shots, matching one sign through a window or door to orient us in terms of the street we have just seen. The red sign outside the café in *Good Morning* is seen through the window after a cut inside. In *An Autumn Afternoon,* the approach to 'the Gourd's' noodle shop is handled similarly by means of the little red-and-white sign just outside the door.
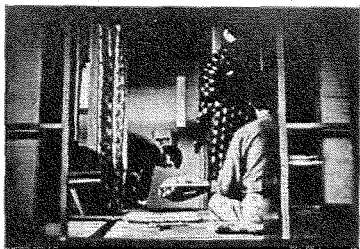
Such 360-degree space does not generate a random pattern which
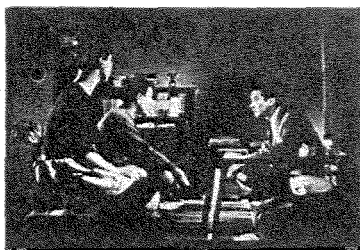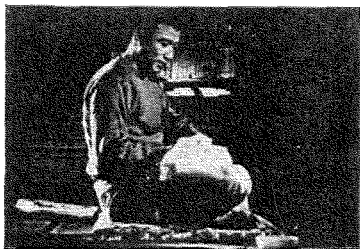

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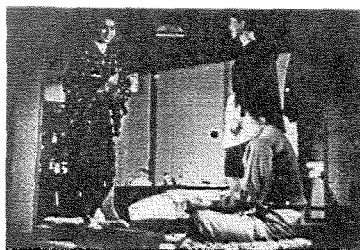
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simply permits cutting anywhere within the scene. On the contrary, Ozu's scenic space is systematically built up, modified by subtle repetitions and variations within the limits he has set for himself. If Hollywood builds upon spatial patterns bounded by 180 degrees and thirty degrees, Ozu's films use limits of 360 degrees and ninety degrees. As the examples given above imply, Ozu often cuts on *multiples of ninety degrees.* Thus he may move through an entire circular pattern in laying out the space of a scene, but he will do so in fairly precise ninety-degree segments. The scene of the boys' lunch in *I Was Born, But . . .* is a series of ninety-degree cuts.

The major set-ups from a scene in *An Autumn Afternoon* demonstrate how Ozu moves through 360 degrees by cutting from one camera position ninety degrees or 180 degrees to a new one; the scene is that in which Koichi's wife finally buys him the golf

clubs. There is a long shot (Still 16) of the four characters present:
the wife in the left foreground, Koichi beyond, visible screen right
of her, both facing right; his friend is facing him at the right,
and Michiko's knees are visible in the lower right foreground.
After some inserted medium shots, there is a cut of 180 degrees as
the friend and Michiko rise to leave. The wife also gets up, but
Koichi remains seated throughout, acting as a spatial anchor.
Because of the 180-degree shift, Koichi is now facing left and the
wife is in the background (Still 17). There follows a ninety-degree
cut to a position behind Koichi, with the friend and Michiko beyond
him going to the door (Still 18). After they have gone, Ozu cuts
ninety degrees once more. Koichi is now seen in medium shot,
again facing right. The sequence has gone through a full circle and
the camera is now facing in the same direction as it had been in
the first shot described (Still 19). With the next cut, the camera
remains in the same spot but has simply been turned 180 degrees;
the wife, who is again seated near Koichi, is now seen in
medium shot. Cut to a longer shot of the two from the same
direction (the wife facing left in each shot) with Koichi in the
foreground. Through the entire scene the camera has been shifted
360 degrees, then another 180 degrees, to end facing, in the
opposite direction from that in which it had begun.

Notice there are two types of circular space involved here. One
places the characters or objects at the centre, with the camera
situated at points along the edge of the circle. This will often be
used when there are several people present, when there is narrative
action in the scene, or at the beginnings and endings of dialogue
scenes between two people. The second type of circular space
places the camera at the centre of the circle, with the characters
on the circle itself. (See the diagrams in Edward Branigan's article
below p 92.) This is typical of the dialogue scenes, especially when
characters are seated; the camera will be between the characters,
cutting to frontal shots of each. This circular approach to dialogue
scenes is Ozu's alternative to the classic shot-reverse-shot pattern.
(Ozu does also use a variant of shot-reverse-shot, but does not stay
on the same side of the characters, as we shall see.)

One final variation within this circular pattern should be men-
tioned. When the spatial lay-out of the scene demands a cut from
a straight-on shot of something (whether frontal or from the sides
or rear) to a three-quarters view of it, Ozu will cut approximately
135 degrees. Thus he shifts the camera through his circular space
in a segment that lies directly between being a ninety-degree or
a 180-degree cut. The transition into the scene of the wife sitting
listening to the radio in *Equinox Flower* provides one instance.
After a shot (Still 20) down the hallway beside the room she is in,
there is a ninety-degree cut to a long shot (Still 21) of the wife seen
facing right in profile. Ozu cuts 135 degrees to a medium shot (Still
22), a three-quarters view of her face; she is now facing left. Such

135-degree cuts (frequent in Ozu's films) provide a way of moving spatially from the intermediate spaces of the transitions into scenes with one or more people present.

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Once this pattern of circular space is established, Ozu's films use the same devices Hollywood does, but without the axis of action. Thus the films also employ *matched action*, but matches occur *across* the 'axis' as effectively as when screen direction is maintained. In the opening sequence of *Early Summer*, there is a long shot of members of the family seated at breakfast; the grandfather is at the left, facing right. He raises a cup to his lips, and on the gesture of him drinking Ozu cuts 180 degrees to a profile shot of the grandfather, now facing left. In *An Autumn Afternoon*, there is a shot of Hirayama, seen waist down and facing left, beginning to take off his coat; his son is in the background. Cut 180 degrees, so that Kazuo is now in the foreground, with Hirayama, now facing right, continuing the gesture of taking off his coat. In *Floating Weeds*, the troupe manager is seen walking across the loft of the theatre; he moves left to right away from the camera (Still 23). As he raises his leg to step up on to a slightly raised platform, cut 180 degrees to match on the movement; now he is moving right to left, facing the camera (Still 24). Earlier in the same film, the manager visits his former mistress. One shot is framed looking from the kitchen to the room beyond where he is sitting. The woman puts a sake bottle on to warm, then goes into the next room and begins to sit, facing directly away from the camera; a 180-degree cut matches on her sitting movement, with the camera now placed directly in front of the woman in medium shot, ready
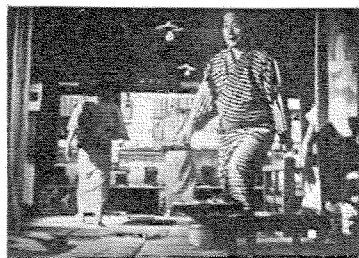
scene.

Again, as in the classical paradigm, Ozu's films make extensive use of eyelines to create space. But the continuity style presupposes

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that the intelligibility of eyeline matches depends upon sticking to the 180-degree rule. If you cannot tell what direction a character is looking in, how can there be a match? Yet Ozu employs eyelines while continuing to make 180-degree cuts, thus creating ' discontinuous ', but true, eyeline matches. In one of the bar scenes in *Tokyo Twilight*, the bartender and barmaid are on opposite sides of a bar looking diagonally across it at each other. Ozu cuts from a medium shot of the barmaid looking off left at the bartender (Still 25) to a similar shot of him looking off left at her (Still 26).

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Hollywood continuity rules imply that the result of such a cut would be to give the impression that the two are situated next to each other looking off at the same thing. Yet, since Ozu has previously shown their relative positions, this is not the effect. Rather, the disorienting but still ' legible ' spatial cues once more bring space forward and force the spectator to an active perceptual play with it.

A similar example occurs in *Late Spring*, but here the relative positions of the characters are shown only *after* the discontinuous eyeline match has occurred. Father and daughter are riding the train into Tokyo together. After a shot of the train going along the track, Ozu returns for the second of the series of short scenes inside the train. The four shots of this scene are all medium close-

ups: 1. Noriko holding onto a swinging handgrip, facing right (Still 27); 2. her father seated reading, facing right. He looks up and off towards the upper right corner of the frame, saying, ' Want to change places? ' (Still 28); 3. Noriko, as before; she glances down and off towards the lower right corner of the frame: ' No . . . I'm all right ' (Still 29); and 4. her father as before; he returns to his reading. The next shot returns to an exterior view of the train. In this series of four shots, space is left ambiguous until the end of the third shot; in the classical continuity system, the eyelines would seem to indicate that Noriko is standing facing away from her father, since they both face right. Yet in looking at her father to reply to his question, her eyeline indicates she is indeed facing him, and Ozu has changed screen direction with each cut. This

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scene is typical in that Ozu often has scenes in which every cut will ' break continuity '; also it is indicative of his use of minimal cues to establish space and the high degree of responsibility he places upon the spectator to ' work out ' the space in his or her own perception. (Compare the redundant establishing and re-establishing of space in the classical paradigm.)

During dialogue scenes Ozu's films will sometimes include both characters in the shot, then cut back and forth from one side of the pair to the other. Thus the elbow of the listener will be seen in a shot of the speaker; then the cut will cross the line formed by the two, and the new listener's elbow will appear on the *same* side of the frame as the other person's had in the previous shot. Examples of this can be found in the scene in *Tokyo Twilight* where the father talks with his brother in a pinball establishment, or in

There Was a Father in a similar scene where the father meets an
old colleague in a go-parlour. In such series of shots, the characters
will both be shown looking offscreen in the same direction even
though we must ' read ' the space as if they are looking directly
at each other. (The ' graphic match ' in a scene from *Passing Fancy,*
to be discussed later, offers another, more spectacular example˙of
the across-the-line dialogue scene.)

Analogous to this device are the *ambiguous* eyeline matches
Ozu occasionally uses. In such cases, there is a shot of a character
or characters looking off, then a cut to a shot which may or may
not present what they see. In *Early Summer,* the old grandparents
are discussing their missing son with their neighbour; they both
pause, and there are medium shots of each looking off right. Cut to
a long shot of a pole with three fish-shaped kites tied to it (cele-
brating ' Boys' Day '). The next shot shows children in the street,
followed by a medium shot of Kamiya and his friend playing *go*
inside the friend's house. It is not clear whether the kites are some-
thing the grandparents can see or not.

Finally, Ozu uses *false* eyeline matches. In this device, a character
looks off and there is a cut to something which may at first appear
to be what that character sees, but is later revealed to be some-
thing else. The provocative cut in *Early Summer* from the tracking
shot of Noriko and her friend in the restaurant is an example. As
they walk down the corridor to peek at the man Noriko almost
agreed to marry, the camera tracks back from them; cut to a track
forward, at the same speed, down a corridor. But this is not, as
we might at first think, what the two women see; the empty cor-
ridor is at Noriko's home and the scene involves the family's
concerned discussion of her impending marriage. (In *Ozu: His Life*
and Films, Berkeley 1974, p 112, Donald Richie dismisses this cut
as ' simple sloppiness '.)

These 360-degree devices have several consequences. They tend
to bring the space on all sides of the character into play, making
the characters constant but the surroundings and background spaces
different from shot to shot. (Cf the classical paradigm, which
strives to stabilise the backgrounds while the characters reposition
themselves within and between shots.) If, moreover, current hypo-
theses about the ' suturing ' effect of the 180-degree rule and the
shot-reverse-shot figure are valid, then Ozu's construction of space
can be seen as an alternative to the classical paradigm in that it
refuses to inscribe the spectator in a fixed ' relaying ' position with
respect to spatial and diegetic closure. The viewer must frequently
reorient him- or herself in the spatial framework of the scene. (We
suggest that Ozu's films provide far more radical examples of the
refusal of ' suture ' than does *Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* — Serge
Oudart's chief example in ' La suture ', *Cahiers du cinéma* n 211,
April 1969, pp 36-9 and n 212, May 1969, pp 50-5.) Finally, in
conjunction with the device of intermediate spaces, this shooting

space takes on yet another function; the spatial elements around the characters — foregrounded through focus, colour, transitions, and cutaways — are carried through scenes of narrative action as overtones in surroundings activated by the 360-degree system.

3. The ' hypersituated ' object

Ozu's treatment of mise-en-scène is also important in structuring how we perceive space in the films. Objects are treated in such a way that they become much more noticeable than their narrative function would seem to warrant in traditional terms.

In applying standard critical approaches to Ozu's films, the temptation is to force the objects he uses into symbolic functions. Like the cutaways, there is no doubt that such objects are *sometimes* symbolic. The child's rattle in *Tokyo Twilight* or the gravestones in *The End of Summer* have fairly clear-cut implications in terms of the narrative. Yet it is difficult, on the procedures of reading learned from the classical paradigm, to ' interpret ' the numerous tea kettles, neon signs, fire extinguishers, beer bottles, vases, striped towels, and similar items that are given such prominence in Ozu's mise-en-scène. Often too these elements reappear in the intermediate spaces.

To a large extent objects are divorced from function in Ozu's films. They become pure spatial elements, parts of still-life compositions; they are separated from any function in the flow of the narrative. Barthes's discussion of the ' hypersituated ' objects of Robbe-Grillet is strikingly relevant to Ozu's mise-en-scène:

'Robbe-Grillet's object has neither function nor substance. Or, more precisely, both are absorbed by the object's optical nature . . . function is cunningly usurped by the very existence of the object: thinness, position, colour, establish . . . a complex space; and if the object is here the function of something, it is not the function of its natural destination . . . but of a visual itinerary. . . . The object is never unfamiliar, it belongs, by its obvious function, to an urban or everyday setting. But the description persists beyond — just when we expect it to stop, having fulfilled the object's instrumentality, it *holds* like an inopportune pedal point and transforms the tool into space: its function was only illusory, it is its optical circuit which is real ' (*Critical Essays*, Evanston, Illinois 1972, pp 15-16).

It is easy to apply this to Ozu if one substitutes for ' description ' the myriad tactics of colour, positioning, timing, etc, by which his shots emphasise an object's visual nature. In Hollywood, any objects which are not used as props or externalisations of character traits are simply there to be minimally noticeable as part of a general verisimilitude — a background for the narrative, an atmosphere of *vraisemblance*. But in many Ozu scenes, the objects in

the space of the scene vie successfully with the narrative action
for attention.

Let us look, for example, at the famous vase in the scene during
the outing at Kyoto in *Late Spring*. Noriko and her father talk while
preparing to sleep; she tells him that the idea of his remarrying
had been distasteful to her. The shots of the scene leading up to
this have been a series of medium close-ups of each, taken from a
point approximately between the shoulders of each as they lie side
by side in their hotel room. After a medium close-up of the father
beginning to snore, there is a cut back to a similar shot of Noriko
looking at him, then beginning to turn her head slightly on her
pillow, looking abstractedly at the ceiling. Cut to a medium-long
shot of a vase in another part of the room, in front of a translucent
window covered with silhouettes of the leaves outside. Cut back
to Noriko, still moving her head slightly and looking at the ceiling;
cut to another, identical shot of the vase, which ends the scene.

Richie (op cit, pp 174-5) implies that the shots of the vase are
taken from Noriko's point-of-view. This is not the case, for several
reasons. Noriko is looking up in the general direction of the ceiling
just before each cut to the vase. Also, the vase is clearly seen in
several earlier shots as being in a corner of the room *behind* and
to the left of the two beds; if Noriko were to look at the vase, she
would have either to raise her head from the pillow or to crane
her neck considerably. Richie also interprets the vase as something
we as spectators ' pour ' our emotions into. He also agrees with
Paul Schrader that the vase functions to transform the emotion of
the scene into something ' transcendent '. Needless to say, this
reading struggles to make the vase ' realistically ' and ' composi-
tionally ' motivated by the narrative, while we suggest that the vase
works against, *brakes* the narrative flow because of its indifference
to Noriko's emotional situation. The object's lack of function
creates a second formal level alongside the narrative; its motivation
is purely ' artistic '.

Such hypersituated objects become particularly prominent during
the transitions, when they are often central in one or more shots
(and participate in the dominant/overtone interplay, as in examples
already discussed). An example from *Equinox Flower* virtually
' bares the device ' of the objects' lack of narrative motivation.
This is the shot of the large building with a neon advertisement
for RCA; the previous scene is an argument between Hirayama and
his daughter Setsuko over whom she should marry. Ozu cuts from
a long shot of Hirayama to the shot of the RCA building, then to
a shot of the street where the Luna Bar is located; the next scene
takes place in the Luna Bar. Why the shot of the RCA building?
Not to establish the locale: we have been to the Luna Bar pre-
viously in the film, and at that point it was established simply with
two shots of the street outside the bar with its lighted sign visible.
Even if the RCA building is a prominent Tokyo landmark, its estab-

lishing function is negated by showing it only the *second* time we see the bar. In fact, its inclusion works against a sense of place; if Ozu had cut directly from Hirayama to the Luna Bar, we would have recognised it at once. As it is, we are delayed and given a 'false start' into the scene by being momentarily disoriented during the RCA-building shot. Although the inclusion of the building is not arbitrary, it does not participate in furthering the narrative, even by carrying symbolic meaning. Like the intermediate spaces, such 'inscrutable' objects (and it may be that their only signification is just this inscrutability) drive wedges into the cause/effect chain.

4. Graphic configurations

One result of Ozu's interest in space as an element apart from narrative is that graphic configurations take on a major structuring role. Often the only governing factor in a cut from one space to another will be the resulting juxtaposition of pictorial elements.

Although Ozu does sometimes use strong visual contrast from shot to shot (as in the strong lights and darks of some *Tokyo Twilight* conversation scenes), one of his films' most notable features is the use of what we might call the *graphic match*. In other words, one or more objects, shapes, and/or colours will be positioned within the frame in one shot in such a way that the element will be matched by a similar element in the next shot. Ozu thus seeks a *stronger graphic* continuity from shot to shot than the classical paradigm permits. This technique appears in Ozu's early films, but there it is often tied fairly closely to the narrative line. In *Passing Fancy*, for example, there are two transitions accomplished by a straight cut from a shot of the father shaking out his coat in the street to one of him shaking it out and hanging it up at home. This *Marienbad*-style device allows Ozu to change the time and space at the cut by matching only visual aspects. A similar transition in the same film cuts from the boy's hands discovering a tear in his coat to the café-owner's hands mending the tear. Most dramatically, in the scene in which the hero's friend Jiro finally tells Harue he is in love with her, Jiro is standing just to the left of centre screen; with his left hand he grasps Harue's hand, which is visible in the lower left corner of the frame, while she is offscreen (Still 30). Ozu then cuts 'across the axis' to achieve an extremely close match on their screen positions and gestures: Harue stands just left of centre, her left hand extended to the lower left corner of the frame, where Jiro's hand is extended in from offscreen grasping it (Still 31). The impact of this key moment of Jiro's declaration is marked not-so much by the banal actions or words of the dialogue, but by this strong visual device; it is a completely different technique for presenting characters than has been used in the film to this point.

In subsequent films, the graphic match becomes divorced from
clear-cut narrative significance. In the scene in *There Was a Father*
where the father visits the home of a former colleague, Ozu plays
with matching the position of his cup on the table from shot to

30   31

shot. (This prefigures the elaborate interplay of shifting objects
upon which Ozu will match in his colour films, especially during
eating scenes.) In *Early Summer* there are two shots of Noriko's
future mother-in-law, Mrs Yabe, hurrying down the street to visit
Noriko's office. The first is a long shot of Mrs Yabe on the side-
walk, with the rear fender of a parked car thrust prominently into
the right foreground of the frame. As Mrs Yabe begins to cross the
street, Ozu cuts to a set-up across the street from her; her position
in the frame is fairly closely matched, but Ozu also has an almost
identically shaped car's fender in the right foreground.

32   33

In most of his post-war films, Ozu also constructs overall visual
configurations which allow him to keep a graphic interplay. The
strong verticals of the Japanese doorways are often placed to either
side of the frame, carrying over from shot to shot. Also, by placing
people in the centre of the frame, facing the camera during the
dialogue scenes (instead of alternating three-quarter views as in
Hollywood shot-reverse-shot), he matches the people graphically.
A number of the conversations between Akiko and her mother and
Akiko and her sister in *Tokyo Twilight* use this device with parti-
cularly close matching (Stills 32, 33), but it can be observed in
virtually any Ozu film.

The device of the graphic match comes to its culmination in

68   Ozu's colour films. In *Good Morning* there is one transition almost purely on colour: one shot of intermediate space shows the outside of the apartment houses, with a bright red sweater stretched out to dry on a line in the upper left; Ozu then cuts to a shot inside the apartment where the ' disreputable ' couple are packing to leave, with their bright red lamp in the precise position in the upper left corner the sweater had occupied. Here the ' logic ' of the cut is almost wholly graphic, divorced from the causal structure of the narrative.

Like the other devices, the graphic match abounds in Ozu's films; a few additional examples must suffice to point out the pattern of usage. In *Floating Weeds* Ozu cuts from a shot through a door to a grassy field with red flowers to a medium shot of a bald man seated working in a yard by a rock wall. The red flowers are repeated in the second shot, but the primary visual element that is matched is a red fish-design awning which hangs into the top of the frame in each shot. In *Good Morning*, the sequence where the boys have run away contains a transition between two different interiors with a passage of time: in the first shot, a lamp hangs in the upper left quarter of the frame, with a clock to its right; Ozu cuts to another hanging lamp and clock in almost identical positions.

An Autumn Afternoon contains several graphic series which exemplify perfectly some of the typical ways Ozu uses these matches. One way is to move through different spaces keeping a general graphic continuity and matching specific small elements within the frame. In the transition into the second scene in Koichi's apartment, one shot shows the exterior of the building, with an unknown woman walking by; the next is down the corridor outside the apartment, with Koichi's wife walking along it towards the camera. As she opens the door, Ozu cuts ninety degrees to a long shot of the room facing the door. The strong vertical lines of the drain pipes in the first shot, the corridor doors and walls in the second, and the window frame in the foreground of the third generally match. But there are also one or two plastic pails in the right foreground of each shot, giving an additional, very specific graphic carry-over.

Ozu also matches objects and actions within scenes. A little later in the film there is a scene in a restaurant where Koichi is dining with his friend Miura. After a transition consisting of shots in other parts of the restaurant, the action begins with a long shot of the two men at a table; the scene then continues with a series of medium frontal shots of the two men. Each has a beer bottle on the table to his right, and these bottles are precisely matched in their position on the screen from shot to shot; Ozu has even turned the labels partially towards the camera to the same degree so that the bottles look exactly the same. The men's faces and body positions are also closely matched. A similar device is used in *Late Autumn* as the daughter Aya sits in a restaurant with a friend of

the family who is trying to persuade her to marry; as we cut back
and forth to frontal shots of them, the white chopsticks laid on the
table in front of them are exactly matched in screen position.
Almost any eating scene in the colour films will yield a similar play
with matches and near-matches of the variously coloured objects
on the table. The most precise match in the Ozu films we have seen
occurs in the first restaurant scene of *An Autumn Afternoon*. After
Horie leaves, Kawai and Hirayama remain to eat and drink alone.
In one frontal medium shot (Still 34), Hirayama raises his sake cup
to his lips; as he drinks, there is a cut to Kawai in exactly the same
posture drinking (Still 35). The two men are dressed identically in
white shirts and dark vests. The graphic match is so exact as to
create almost the effect of a jump cut.
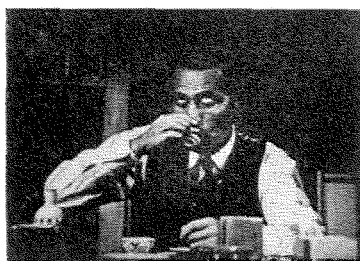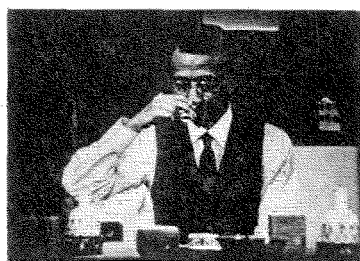
34   35

This concern with graphic play distinctly separated from the
action of the narrative is perhaps carried to its most radical degree
(at least of all the films we have seen) in one scene in *The Record
of a Tenement Gentleman*, which contains a device so idiosyncratic
that it cannot be situated within any of the categories we have
discussed so far. It occurs during the scene at the photographer's
studio fairly late in the film. The old woman is sitting for a portrait
with the little boy she has decided to adopt. After the preparations,
there is a long shot of the scene, with the photographer at his
camera in the left foreground; as he clicks the shutter, there is a
moment of darkness, then the darkness ' wipes ' upward to reveal
a ' camera's point-of-view ', a medium shot, *upside-down*, of the
pair. This image remains on the screen briefly then the entire
screen goes black again, and the rest of the dialogue of the scene
is given over this blackness. Again the darkness wipes away
upwards, but now what is revealed is the empty studio in long
shot, including the still camera we have supposedly been looking
through; the action is over – an ellipsis has occurred during the
last instant of darkness. Later films, particularly those of Bresson,
have approached the blank screen to varying degrees (usually with
a ' realistic ' motivation), but in 1947 *The Report of a Tenement
Gentleman* went so far as to continue an action scene while keep-
ing the frame blank through a device (the still camera in the scene)
only peripheral to the action. By making an impossible conjunction

between the camera eye view at the beginning of the shot and the view of the camera itself at the end of the shot, the blackened screen surface exposes the artistic motivation behind its purely transitional function.

Such graphic play is, then, central to Ozu's modernity because the screen surface itself and the configurations that traverse it are treated as independent of the scenographic space of the narrative. That such screen space may be a powerful source of non-narrative structures is suggested not only by such films as *Ballet Mécanique* (which, like many abstract films, uses graphic parameters structurally) but also by Barthes's comments on the ' obtuse meaning ' – the graphic patterns we have been discussing – in a non-abstract film like *Ivan the Terrible:*

' The obtuse meaning is clearly counter-narrative itself. Diffused, reversible, caught up in its own time, it can if one follows it, establish only another script that is distinct from the shots, sequences and syntagmas (both technical and narrative), an entirely different script, counter-logical but " true ". . . . The story (diegesis) is no longer merely a powerful system (an age-old narrative system), but also and contradictorily a simple space, a field of permanences and permutations. It is that configuration, that stage whose false limits multiply the signifier's permutative function. It is that vast outline which compels a *vertical* reading (the expression is Eisenstein's); it is that *false* order which makes it possible to avoid pure series, aleatoric combination (chance is merely a cheap signifier) and to achieve a structuring *which leaks from the inside.* We can say, then, that in Eisenstein's case we must reverse the cliché which holds that the more gratuitous the meaning, the more it appears to be simply parasitic in relation to the story as told: on the contrary it is this story which becomes " parametric " to the signifier, of which it is now merely the field of displacement, the constitutive negativity, or even the fellow traveller ' (' The Third Meaning ', *Art Forum* Vol XI, No 5, January 1973, pp 49-50).

The graphic configurations which Ozu, like Eisenstein, forces on our attention, represent simply the most radical of those strategies by which space becomes a signifier to which the narrative becomes ' parametric '. The indifference of the films' spatial structures to the temporal and causal chain of the narrative is precisely what demands a vertical, contrapuntal, active reading of Ozu's films.

III
Few critics have, however, been willing to perform such a reading. They have instead set about repressing the potentially disruptive force of such spatial structures. Donald Richie has thematised them,

insisting that all of Ozu's films revolve around ' the revelation of character '. He thus reads transitions and intermediate spaces as barometers of the characters' psychology and hypostatised point-of-view patterns.[3] In effect, Richie makes Ozu's work part of the classical paradigm. When he cannot read a shot as realistically motivated, he falls back on claims about ' pleasing compositions ' and suggestions that Ozu was so interested in the characters that he was ' cavalier about continuity ' (p 127). Paul Schrader's *Transcendental Style in Cinema: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer* (Berkeley 1972) mounts an interpretation that, in effect, seeks to fill the narratively empty spaces of Ozu's films with a transcendent presence (eg the Zen concept of *mu*) and released emotions, thus naturalising the films as traditional religious art (see especially pp 17-18, 47-55). Jonathan Rosenbaum, far more subtle than Richie and Schrader, nonetheless reverts in ' Richie's Ozu: Our Prehistoric Present ' (*Sight and Sound* v 44 n 3, Summer 1973), to a model of audience identification and detachment: the spatial structuring in one scene from *Woman of Tokyo* is seen as a ' *distanciation* from the characters ' that ' constituted a very special kind of intimacy ' (p 179). Though Rosenbaum does not explain further, the vestiges of psychological motivation for such spaces hover over his argument. .

Clearly these readings, especially Richie's, are excessively conservative in that they naturalise and thus foreclose the multiplicity of Ozu's spatial structures. True, to see Ozu's films as ' open ' modernist works is to discard the clichés about their ' static ', ' traditional ' qualities and yield oneself to a dangerous freedom; the old Ozu is far more comforting. But naturalisation pays the price of insipidity, as Jonathan Culler has pointed out:

' What [the writer] must do is to create a text which continually makes us aware of the cost at which we naturalise, which flaunts the difference between verbal surface and naturalising interpretation so that we see how much richer and less banal the former is than the latter. . . . The poet or novelist succeeds in challenging naturalisation not by going beyond the bounds of sense but by creating a verbal surface whose fascination is greater than that of any possible naturalisation and which thereby challenges the models by which we attempt to comprehend and circumscribe it ' (' Making Sense ', *Twentieth Century Studies*, n 12, December 1974, p 33).

In such a way, the complexity of Ozu's films rebukes attempts to confine it within expressionistic or simple Brechtian models.

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3. Op cit pp 57-8, 138, 164-76. Unfortunately we cannot here enter into detailed discussion of the methodological difficulties and sheer factual errors of Richie's book. Interested readers are referred to reviews by Kristin Thompson, *Velvet Light Trap* n 16, Winter 1975-6, and Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Sight and Sound* v 44 n 3, Summer 1975.

Such complexity may be seen in summary form in a scene which bares Ozu's spatial devices – the hide-and-seek game in *The End of Summer*. This sequence consists of nineteen shots, starting at the point where the boy gets up to hide and ending as he emerges from his hiding place and wanders off calling his grandfather. During the scene, many of the devices we have examined here are used in their usual fashion to play with the perception of the audience, but here they present a literal game among the characters as well. If such disorienting space were to appear in the films of the classically coded paradigm, this tacit acknowledgement of the devices as play would itself be motivated by the narrative, the game itself; but in this film, the diegetic instance becomes motivated by the spatial devices, ' baring ' them.

The first four shots begin the game simply enough, as the boy begins to leave and comes back to warn the grandfather not to peek. The camera is facing the garden courtyard of the house as the boy goes out left in shot 3; the front door is behind the camera. The action, complex as it appears, takes place primarily in two rooms, each divided into three equal sections by short protruding walls. After the boy leaves, the camera shifts 180 degrees to a medium shot of the grandfather beginning to rise; the garden is now behind the camera, the door in the background. Cut to a long shot from the same side, as the grandfather completes his action of rising; he goes out left, glancing off right where the boy had gone. After the old man has disappeared off left, cut to a long shot of the next three-part room; the camera has turned 180 degrees again – we now see the garden in the background, and the old man, who has not changed the direction of his movement, comes in from the left. He opens a drawer, then closes it as his daughter comes in from the left on a walkway that runs around the garden. The remainder of the scene (too long to describe in detail here) consists of a ˙complex orchestration of movements in and out of rooms, glances towards offscreen sounds, and cries of ' Are you ready ' from the grandfather and ' Come and find me ' from the boy. Let us look briefly at how the devices we have discussed are used.   •

In addition to the 180-degree cuts already mentioned, there is another between shots 16 and 17 as the old man finishes dressing and leaves the room with the bureau to go to the front door. The camera is facing the garden in shot 16, and the old man goes out left; the cut moves us to the original room, now facing away from the garden again, as the old man comes in from the left. By not maintaining screen direction, Ozu keeps us in confusion in many shots as to where the characters will come from.

There is also a false eyeline match in the scene. In shot 11, the old man comes into˙ a doorway between the two rooms, staring towards the camera, calling ' Are you ready? ' Cut to a shot of his daughter, who had passed through along the garden walkway in

shot 10, continuing to walk along another side of it; she glances back in the direction of the camera, then goes out into another part of the house. This might appear to be a 180-degree cut (from shot 11 to shot 12), from the old man looking to what he sees. Yet the garden is visible in the background of shot 11 and is still seen in shot 12. Also, a table corner visible in the lower left corner of the frame in shot 11 is graphically matched in the same position in shot 12. Thus the cut is ninety degrees and cannot reveal what the old man is looking at. He is presumably watching to make sure the boy doesn't see him preparing to leave.

Shot 16 is the most complex of the series; it is a long shot of the room with the bureau, facing the garden. The old man is dressing as the shot begins; from offscreen we hear the boy's voice: ' Come and find me '. He glances off left, apparently in the direction of the voice, then hurries off left in the section of the room closest to the garden. Immediately his daughter comes in from the left in the centre section of the room; it was at her rather than the boy that the old man glanced. As she exits right along the garden walkway, another ' Come and find me ' is heard. The old man re-enters, but from the door at the left through which his daughter had entered. He gets something from the bureau, calling, ' Are you ready? ' The reply, ' Come and find me ', is heard again,' and the old man re-crosses and goes out left, from where he had entered. In the scene as a whole, characters are kept offscreen so long that we are never sure where they are. Ozu adds to this uncertainty by ' crossing the line ', holding on empty rooms, and confusing us about what is seen by characters who glance offscreen.

Such perceptual play cannot be read, à la Richie and Schrader, as ' objectifications ' of the characters' states; here, as elsewhere, the devices render the film radically a-psychological. Ozu's films open a gap between narrative and various spatial structures, and within this gap we can glimpse the work of a cinema which (like Eisenstein's and Tati's) permits space to contest the primacy of the cause-effect chain. Ozu does not eliminate narrative; as Barthes writes in ' The Third Meaning ': 'The present problem is not to destroy narrative but to subvert it ' (p 50). In such working upon the narrative, Ozu's spaces demand to be read plurally, for their own sakes, challenging us to play, however vertiginously, within them.

The Space of *Equinox Flower**

Edward Branigan

One critic says of a film by Ozu Yasujiro that ' There is generally
poetry in exactness.' Without question the style of Ozu may be
termed exact. The precision of Ozu in *Equinox Flower* – made in
1958 and his first colour film – is perhaps most obvious in his
editing practice. Through editing, the space of a film develops as a
flow of spatial fragments which interact to reveal (and imply!)
larger physical spaces. In *Equinox Flower* that development of space
appears as rigorous as the rectangular latticework that decorates
the walls of many of the homes of the film. It encompasses such
elements as the choice of camera-to-subject distance, slight varia-
tion in angle, the formal pattern of camera set-ups, the introduction
of ninety-degree angles and overlapping space, as well as the
graphic potential of consecutive spatial fragments. These are the
major elements that operate to create the space of *Equinox Flower*.
I will examine these elements in an attempt to specify the
material correlates of Ozu's style of exactness. Only in this manner
will the ' poetry ' of such a style achieve definition.

First, however, it may be helpful to sketch briefly the plot of
Equinox Flower. The film, set in post-war Japan, concerns the efforts
of Mr Hirayama – a middle-aged father successful in business – to
arrange a marriage for his daughter Setsuko. A younger daughter,
Hisako, is not quite ready for marriage. Setsuko, however, is in
love with another man and opposes the arranged marriage. Her
mother (not named in the film) – whose own marriage was arranged
– is more understanding than her father. Hirayama at first refuses
to attend the wedding, then relents, but does not finally accept the
marriage until later when he decides to visit his daughter in her

new home. There are, in a*ddition, two parallel subplots. One involves Mrs Sasaki and her daughter Yukiko, an unmarried girl-friend of Setsuko; and the second concerns Fumiko, the daughter of Mikami − a close friend of Hirayama − who has left home to live with a man and work at the Luna Bar.

I Shot Scale

In the classical Hollywood film the scale of the shot varies accord-ing to an inverted pyramid structure as illustrated by the following:
    1. Establishing Shot (a major variant: we see a detail of the scene, then pull back or cut to the establishing shot)
    2. Long Shot (master shot)
    3. Medium Two-Shot
    4. Reverse Angles (over-the-shoulder shots)
    5. alternating Medium Close-ups (sometimes Point-of-View Shots)
    6. Cut-away (or Insert)
    7. alternating Medium Close-ups
    8. Re-establishing Shot (usually a reverse angle or two-shot)
Ozu by contrast employs a model based on three different types of shots − the Transition, Full Shot, and Medium Shot − as follows:
    1. Transition
    2. Full Shot
    3. Medium Shot of each individual
    4. Full Shot
    5. alternating Medium Shots
    6. new Full Shot
    7. alternating Medium Shots
    8. Transition (often includes a repetition of the initial full shot)
In his later work Ozu does not use fades and dissolves. The Ozu transition, instead, consists of one or more shots − often still lifes − of outdoor spaces (eg an alleyway, bridge, advertising sign, passing train or boat, a distant mountain) usually coupled with indoor spaces (eg a vase or table) that as a unit open and close the film as well as operate between the scenes. In the later Ozu films nearly every scene is introduced or mediated by a series of transitional spaces. In *Equinox Flower* only two of the thirty scenes are not enclosed by transitional spaces. The transition device of Ozu is called a ' coda ' by Paul Schrader,[1] but the more precise musical analogy is the ' modulation '.

1. Paul Schrader: *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer,* Los Angeles 1972, pp 29, 33-4 and 37. A more formal view is offered by Kristin Thompson in '*Transitions*' in *Equinox Flower,* an unpublished paper for the seminar ' Sparseness in the Cinema '.

The narrative function of the Ozu transition or modulation is
rather complex. A few general comments, however, may be useful.
First, the Ozu transition establishes the space of the scene and in
this respect is like the shot of the exterior of a bank in a classical
Hollywood film; we are provided a master grid with which to read
subsequent spaces. However, unlike the bank exterior Ozu's tran-
sitions often establish the space only obliquely or retrospectively.
The two scenes in Yukiko's apartment are identified by shots of a
nearby hospital (stills 9, 10). The reunion scene at a seaside inn
opens with two shots of stone lanterns, but it is not until many
shots later *inside* the inn that we understand where these lanterns
are located. Further, the transitions frequently do not establish
space in the most economical and efficient way. Between the shot
of a Kyoto pagoda and Yukiko walking along a Kyoto street we
see a wooded hillside. Thus Ozu's transitions often function to
impede the recognition and start of the following scene.

What are the consequences of this strategy? First, space and the
objects in space assume a special priority – an existence all their
own apart from, independent of, the characters and plot. As
Penelope Gilliat, the critic referred to in my first sentence, notes,
there is a ' sense that the inanimate world existed long before man-
kind did and will be here long after we are extinct' ' (*New Yorker*
v XLIX n 13, May 19, 1973, p 83). We see a white vase before it
becomes a white vase *in* Hirayama's home. Though we may see
people walking down a hallway to Hirayama's office, we also see
the hallway at a later time when it is empty – when it is merely a
hallway and not a hallway *to* an office. Empty spaces such as the
hallways of office and home or the Luna-Bar passageway (which
appears nine times) create a tension of uncertainty through repeti-
tion and variation for we know that characters have travelled, may
travel, actually travel, or sometimes travel through the space. This
tension of ambiguity serves to break the identification of character
and space.

Quite often we see an unknown person or persons cross through
an empty space. Paradoxically it is this nominal movement which
may create the perception of emptiness. The function of these
persons is made even more formal – and the space more autono-
mous – when we notice that they often move in step with one
another or at regular intervals. At one point in *Equinox Flower*
there is a match on motion from a waiter in a white coat crossing
the end of a hallway to a woman in a white sweater crossing, in
the same direction, the end of an alleyway. In conjunction with the
music which is an invariable component of the transitions, these
regular movements generate a rhythm through the empty spaces
and confirm their existence.

The transitional space is not the space of characters. Rarely does
a character appear in a transition; even the glance of a character
seems to evaporate into these spaces. Both Yukiko and Hirayama

will look outdoors and comment on the weather but instead of
cutting to what they see – an eyeline match – a transition begins
in a distant space. Though characters are often left at the end of a
scene staring pensively, the transitional spaces do not mirror the
mental or emotional state of the characters; nor do they follow
the expectation or natural interest of the viewer. We are surprised
when an Ozu character suddenly breaks into tears just as we often
fail to recognise the narrative logic which draws us to a space until
well into the scene. For example, Hirayama tells Yukiko that he will
have his daughter visit her (the classical ' transitional hook '
through dialogue, described for example by Lewis Herman in his
A Practical Manual of Screen Playwriting, New York 1952, p 144)
but the next scene is of Yukiko's mother in the hospital: *then* we
move to Yukiko's apartment – which is near the hospital – for the
visit (through the device of a quasi-point-of-view shot!). There is
even one sub-scene which is never explained by the narrative.
During a conversation with Mrs Sasaki, Hirayama stands up,
indicates he will return, and walks down the hall to his office where
he sits quietly looking over various papers. There are many possible
reasons, including no specific reason (!), why he leaves Mrs Sasaki;
but we never find out.

The transition, then, serves to establish the space of a scene,
but more importantly to establish the priority of space and to
generate a rhythm. The transitional shots are followed by the full
shot. This shot includes all of the individuals in a new scene from
the distance of a long shot (stills 6, 28, 37). It is followed, in turn,
by medium shots of each individual (eg stills 1, 15, 23, 38). Ozu
never approaches closer than a medium shot of a character. There
are no medium close-ups – shoulders and above – or close-ups.
Typically the camera is placed directly *between* two individuals (eg
stills 35, 36) and no matter how close they are sitting in the full
shot the alternation between characters will be in medium perspec-
tive (eg stills 28, 29, 30; 6, 33, 34). For this reason, the number of
different medium shots in a scene is restricted; in a short scene
there will be only one type of medium shot of each individual from
a single set-up. Hence profile shots stand out in an Ozu film.
Generally a character must move to a new sub-space in order to
rate a new medium shot. Such movement is uncommon in an Ozu
scene and is never used to introduce new space for the purpose of
relieving the repetition of previous medium shots – a common
technique, however, in classical films and television serials where
a character talks while he walks to a window, another character
ambles over to pour coffee, etc.

Any deviation from the pattern of medium shots would be signi-
ficant. In the crucial family-dinner scene in which Hirayama
announces he will attend the wedding of his daughter, we begin
with three persons seated around a table. This arrangement would
typically lead to two different types of medium shots for each

individual – from set-ups between each pair of individuals – a total of six medium set-ups. Instead we see three set-ups of Hisako, two of Setsuko, and only one of the mother. The mother plays a central role between Setsuko and her father, Hirayama. The mother's narrative importance is here revealed in terms of space.

Ozu does not utilise medium or long two-shots where three or more persons are together. Each person appears alone in his or her own space. If two persons are in a room, they will appear

Figure 1

The Sequence of Set-ups
in the Family-Outing Scene
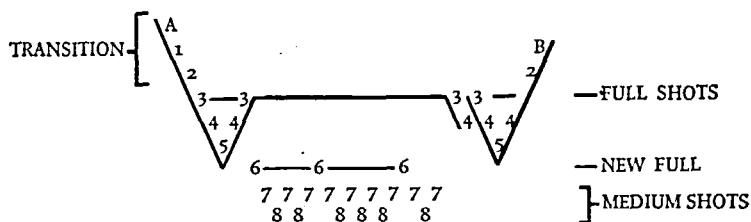
A – hallway (home)
B – hallway (office)

1 – tree
2 – two trees
3 – Hirayama and wife on bench
4 – at the railing
5 – rowboat (Setsuko and Hisako)
6 – Hirayama and wife (90 degrees from set-up 3)
7 – wife
8 – Hirayama

together only in the full shot. The nearest equivalent of a two-shot in an Ozu film will reveal only a small part of the second person's body: a sleeve, a hand, the knees of someone kneeling, or, rarely, part of a shoulder. In these cases the fragment of a body occupies a relatively small portion of the frame and remains absolutely stationary so that it functions less as a synecdoche for a person and more as graphic potential for the composition. There are, in fact, only nine two-shot set-ups in *Equinox Flower* and only four

(each appearing only once) in *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962).
As a scene progresses the full shot will be replaced by a new full shot which is a major variant of the first full shot. These full shots are used to punctuate the repetition of medium shots. For example (figure 1), in the family-outing scene the repetition _of medium shots (set-ups 7, 8) is divided by a full shot (set-up 6) which sequence is in turn divided by a major variant of that full shot (set-up 3 – ninety-degree change in angle) which in addition

Figure 2

The Sequence of Set-ups
in the First Mikami Scene

```
            ⎡  A
            ⎢  B
TRANSITION ⎨     C
            ⎢      D
            ⎣       1————————————————1 — 1
                    2  2
                    3  3
                       4————————————4*—4*    — FULL SHOTS
                       5 5 5 5  5 5 5 5     ⎤
                       6 6 6  6 6 6 6       ⎬ MEDIUM SHOTS
                            7              — NEW FULL
                            |
```
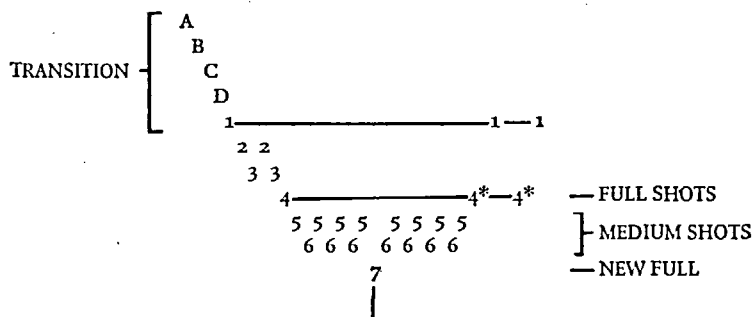
A – wife of Hirayama (folding clothes)
B – two buildings
C – one building (window washers)
D – interior (window washers)

1 – hallway
2 – long shot office door
3 – Hirayama at desk
4 – Mikami and Hirayama at table (cabinet left)
4* – closer (cabinet)
5 – Hirayama
6 – Mikami
7 – closer two shot (no cabinet)

*Slight variation in camera set-up

divides into the transitions on each end of the scene. A similar structure obtains for the Mikami and noodle-restaurant scenes (figures 2 and 3) (cf still 37 – set-up 4 in the noodle restaurant – with still 39 – set-up 9).

In the dinner scene – which is much longer – there are three full shots of the table. The first appears four times (still 6), then gives way to the second (180-degree shift in angle) which appears five times, then gives way to the third (ninety-degree shift in angle)

which appears four times, and finally the first full shot reappears to introduce the final series of medium shots. Again, these full shots function to mark off repeating sets of medium shots with each individual surrounded by a private space. The private space is further emphasised by the fact that Ozu never uses dialogue to bridge two medium shots. Off-camera speech, too, is severely limited.

If the spatial progression of an Ozu scene is highly determined,

Figure 3

The Sequence of Set-ups
in the Noodle-Restaurant Scene

```
            ┌ 1
TRANSITION ┤  2
            └ 3
              4——————————4————4*————4*        — FULL SHOTS
              5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
              6 6 6 6 6   6 6 6              6*   ]·MEDIUM
                              7 7 7               ]·NEW MEDIUM
                              8 8 8
                                          9    — NEW FULL
```
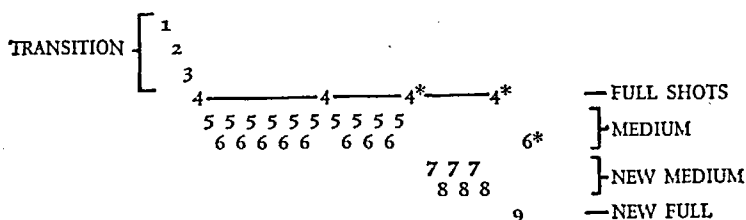
1 — street
2 — cooks
3 — cooks (180 degrees from set-up 2)
4 — Fumiko and Hirayama
4*— further back (boyfriend arrives)
5 — Fumiko
6 — Hirayama
6*— Hirayama (poster visible)
7 — Hirayama standing
8 — Fumiko and boyfriend standing
9 — from behind Hirayama (180 degrees from set-up 4)

*Slight variation in camera set-up

so also is the narrative progression. Donald Richie finds a five-part pattern beginning with empty space or characters in repose and continuing with preliminary action, followed by dialogue – the main point of the scene – then after-talk which is often humorous, and concluding with a return to repose (' Yasujiro Ozu: The Syntax of his Films ', *Film Quarterly*, v XVII n 2, Winter 1963-4, p 15). The narrative codes singled out by Roland Barthes in his study of Balzac's *Sarrasine*, *S/Z* (New York 1974), provide another base for

analysing the Ozu scene. Roughly, the five codes may be defined
as follows:

1. The *hermeneutic* is that code which at various times names a subject, states a condition, proposes a question, delays its answer in multifarious ways, and finally discloses the answer which is the truth of the narrative.

2. The *proairetic* is that code of actions, consequences, gestures and behaviour which become sequences (eg stroll, murder, rendez-vous) when and because they are given a name in the process of reading. The proairetic is a cause-effect chain whose logic is that of the probable, of practical experience, of psychology, of culture, of history, of the ' already-done ', ' already-written ' or ' already-seen '.

3. The *semic* is a code which includes the connotations of persons, places or objects. Thus the semic constructs the characters and ambience of narrative. A character is nothing but a galaxy of apparently trifling data which has coalesced around a proper name.

4. The *cultural* or referential code refers to any generally accepted body of knowledge or wisdom generated by a culture, eg psychology, history, science, literature, aphorism.

5. The *symbolic* is a code of meaning/relation based on the figures of rhetoric, the traits of the body or economic (exchange) systems.

The classical text's strategy is to intertwine or ' braid ' these codes. As they intertwine, the codes act to limit each other's polysemic or plural nature. Thus the semic is often glued to the hermeneutic; in film narrative, for example, the ' stranger ' often exists solely to pose an enigma, or an object (eg the Maltese Falcon) solely to be the object of inquiry. The device of doubling – the repetition of meaning among codes (see *Screen* v 14 n 3, Autumn 1973, pp 33-5) – is part of the process of limiting the polysemic nature of the codes. Without a process of isolation, the codes in a visual art are infinitely present at any moment, which is to say that an infinity of narratives is possible with no one narrative actualised. For narrative to exist the codes must interact one with another at some minimal level.

If we examine the Ozu scene in these terms, the middle of the scene contains hermeneutic, proairetic, and semic coding; the beginning and especially the end contain semes of character; the transitions contain semes of place and object. This division of narrative codes suggests that the Ozu text is less concerned with intertwining or braiding the codes and more concerned with cutting the codes free of one another to achieve a certain independence, to reaffirm an equality. When a code is alone, Barthes says (*S/Z*, op cit, p 160), it ' does no labour, transforms nothing: it *expresses* '. Put another way, we might say that the character repose at the end of a scene and the transitions because of their singular-code structure operate to empty the text of meaning, to suspend ' the

obsessional play of symbolic substitutions' (Barthes) and 'the compulsive production of meaning' (Burch).[2] Indeed the strategy of separating the codes, impeding their interaction, may be applied at the level of the scene. It is not until one-third into *Equinox Flower* (scene 11 of 30 scenes) that the central conflict arises. Later there is an entire scene – the reunion – which is irrelevant to the plot of the film. There is also a remarkable shot midway through that reunion scene which takes us to the garden outside the reunion inn (with continuous diegetic sound) as if a transition were beginning; but the next shot returns us to the interior. Thus space not only separates the scenes but may break into the scene itself.

In sum the transition for Ozu is not merely a connection of narrative spaces from one to the next – a mutual dependence of codes – but the penetration of space as space into the narrative. It is a difference of the order ' we see Hirayama ' and ' we see space and we see Hirayama in space '.

II   Incremental Variation

The classical Hollywood style will employ the technique of reframing – a slight change in camera angle, distance, or lens focal length – in order to hold a character in the centre of the frame or to make

1   2

room for the entrance of a second character. Reframing will also be employed between shots; that is, when a shot is repeated it may have been slightly changed in anticipation that a character will soon stretch out a hand or a door in the background will open. Ozu, like Hollywood, reframes his camera, but – since there are no camera movements in *Equinox Flower* – he uses reframing only between shots. In Ozu films, however, reframing is not a slave to the narrative dominant or character movement.

2. Quotations from *L'Empire des signes* and the chapter on Ozu in a
    forthcoming book on the Japanese cinema, respectively, both cited
    by Jonathan Rosenbaum: ' Richie's Ozu: Our Prehistoric Present ',
    Sight and Sound v 44 n 3, Summer 1975, p 179.

Consider two set-ups of Setsuko's mother. The first (still 1) occurs five times and then is replaced by the second (still 2) which occurs four times. These shots occur during a crucial scene in which Setsuko refuses the arranged marriage and argues with her parents. It is at the point where she ends her argument and leaves the room that the shot of the mother is slightly reframed (still 2). Notice that the striped cup has not moved from the left frame but that a mirror surface, with a cover containing pictures of multi-coloured birds and previously half visible, is now fully visible. In addition the background lighting has been slightly altered from a flat background to a background which recedes toward a vanishing point not in centre frame but off frame left (the linear perspective is created by the angle of the mirror and the two sets of window partitions). The reframed shot seems to mark out a narrative unit; here, to mark the shift to a conversation between the parents in which the mother suggests that she will break with Hirayama and support Setsuko.

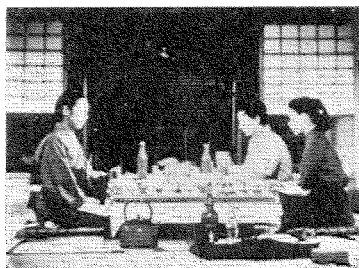Another function of reframing is illustrated by the dinner scene

3
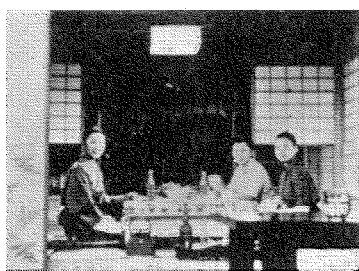
4

5

6

(stills 3-6). The maid (3) looks into a room and sees the mother, Setsuko and Hisako (4). The next shot (5) repeats the set-up of 3 but now slightly reframed so that a new space opens on the left frame (containing a partition, turquoise towel, and green foliage). The following shot (6) repeats the set-up of 4 but also slightly reframed so that the foreground table and a vertical partition disappear and a top-frame horizontal is now fully visible, which completes an elaborate matching of vertical lines (both left and right partitions) in these four shots. The reframing functions here

to pull us away from one space (3, 5) and edge us into another space (4, 6) by matching on graphic qualities. The change in distance alone would not accomplish this effect since the change is so slight that if the shots were coupled the result would be a jump cut. Instead the emergence of the left vertical (in 5) and the disappearance of the table and vase (in 6) – rather than distance itself – are the physical correlates of distance and space.

A third function of reframing in Ozu is the introduction of new graphic elements into narrative. (The importance of graphic elements will be considered later.) In the noodle-restaurant scene
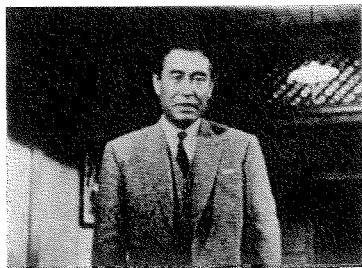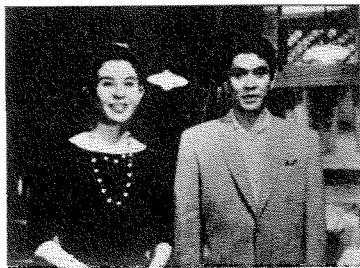
7   8

(figure 3) set-up 4 is reframed to 4* (the asterisk indicates reframing) not only to accommodate the arrival of Fumiko's boyfriend but to inaugurate the play of overhead lights with character movement throughout set-ups 4*, 7 (still 7), and 8 (still 8). The reframed shot adds three overhead lights which angle into the distance.

A fourth function of reframing in Ozu is more difficult to define but perhaps has some relation to the apprehension of time (succession and variation). This notion arises from the fact that a majority of the scenes in his later work contain shots which reveal a slight change of camera position. Often the slight change will appear toward the end of the scene. In the noodle-restaurant scene set-up 6 is slightly reframed to 6* (a poster is revealed on the right frame) even though Hirayama has returned to his chair at the table and there is no further action in the scene. Similarly, at the end of the Mikami scene (figure 2) set-up 4* differs from 4 only in that the shiny silver handles of a cabinet are more prominent in the immediate foreground.

Schrader (op cit, p 33) claims that Ozu's stylistic tendency to reframe – ' a difference, however minute ' – springs from the philosophical concern of Zen Buddhism for the uniqueness and differentiation of life. He also speaks (p 31) of an Ozu film as the expression of the imperceptible movements of the mind in contemplation. Richie (op cit, p 15) would locate these imperceptible movements primarily at the end of scenes where there is a narrative pause, a stasis – a private moment for a character, a ' continuous continuation ' – before the transition to the next scene. Typically the Ozu scene will end as the conversation turns to incidental

matters, then lapses, and a character is left in contemplation (cf stills 15, 19). In any event slight reframing does seem to occur at the end of many scenes and, perhaps, to involve the apprehension of time in a special sense.

Time in an Ozu film would seem to be related to time in a Robbe-Grillet novel. Barthes puts it this way:

' Classical Time has no other figure than that of a destroyer of perfection. . . . One might say that the classical object is never anything but the archetype of its own ruin, which means setting against the object's spatial essence a subsequent (hence external) time functioning as a destiny and not as an internal dimension. . . . Robbe-Grillet gives his objects an entirely different type of mutability. It is a mutability whose process is invisible: an object, first described at a moment of novelistic continuity, reappears later on, endowed with a scarcely perceptible difference. This difference is of a spatial, situational order (for instance, what was on the right is now on the left). Time dislocates space and constitutes the object as a series of slices which almost completely overlap each other: in that spatial " almost " lies the object's temporal dimension. . . . Robbe-Grillet's objects never decay, they mystify or disappear: their time is never degradation or cataclysm: it is only change of place or concealment of elements ' (*Critical Essays*, Evanston 1972, pp 20-21).

It should be mentioned that a functional equivalent of slight reframing is a slight change in mise-en-scène between two identical set-ups. Like reframing, it is a common formal device in *Equinox Flower*. In the family outing (figure 1), for instance, the difference between the two occurrences of set-up 5 is that at the end of the scene the boat is further from shore and the waves somewhat
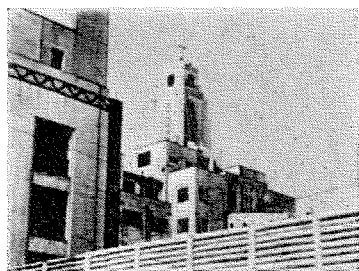
9　　　　　　　　　10

larger; otherwise all is the same: the boat is still moving in the same direction, in the centre of the frame, with respect to exactly the same landmarks, and the daughters once again wave to their parents.

The slight variation in mise-en-scène occurs also between scenes. The two shots of a hospital exterior (stills 9, 10) which introduce scenes in Yukiko's apartment differ only in that the later shot does

not contain a foreground tree. Similarly the shots of the Luna-Bar alleyway leading into the two Luna-Bar scenes differ in that a car ' changes ' shape, a red poster becomes yellow, and scattered silvery water on the pavement becomes a shiny pool. Still another example: when the street outside Hirayama's home is shown a second time from the same set-up, the same action is repeated (the arrival of Yukiko; later, the arrival of her mother) with two subtle changes: the cab ' changes ' colour from green to white and in the far background a woman in a red sweater and her friend now walk away on the left, rather than right, side of the street. Incidentally, the woman in the red sweater and her friend appear in the far background in two other scenes of *Equinox Flower*: another triumph of variation in an Ozu film.

In sum the tactics of slight reframing or slight adjustment of mise-en-scène are evidence of a systematic process of spatial nuance – an incremental variation of space. Its purposes are multiple: to mark narrative units through spatial shift, to edge us into or out of space, to introduce graphic elements into space, and, perhaps ultimately, to confront the temporal dimension as it exists within surface and space.


III   Editing

One approach to the description of editing is to concentrate on the arrangement or flow of camera set-ups; that is, to concentrate on the repetition of shots. The sequence of set-ups in a scene may be diagrammed as in figures 1-3. The possibility arises that the repetition of these camera placements (hence repetition of shots) may become a formal pattern. In *Theory of Film Practice* (London 1973, p 14) Noël Burch has asserted, in a related context, that the space of a film, through editing, is

' capable of rigorous development through such devices as rhythmic alternation, recapitulatión, retrogression, gradual elimination, cyclical repetition, and serial variation, thus creating structures similar to those of twelve-tone music '.

It is often the case in Ozu films that a scene will display a rigorous spatial pattern – a demonstrable symmetry – in terms of camera set-ups. Consider the pattern of the family-outing scene (figure 1). The scene ends by reversing the order of the set-ups which opened the scene:

(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3) ——→ (3, 4) (3, 4, 5, 4, –, 2, –)

These two progressions – beginning and ending the scene – are further set off by the fact that they contain no dialogue – conversation is limited to the middle shots of the scene (set-ups 6, 7, and 8).
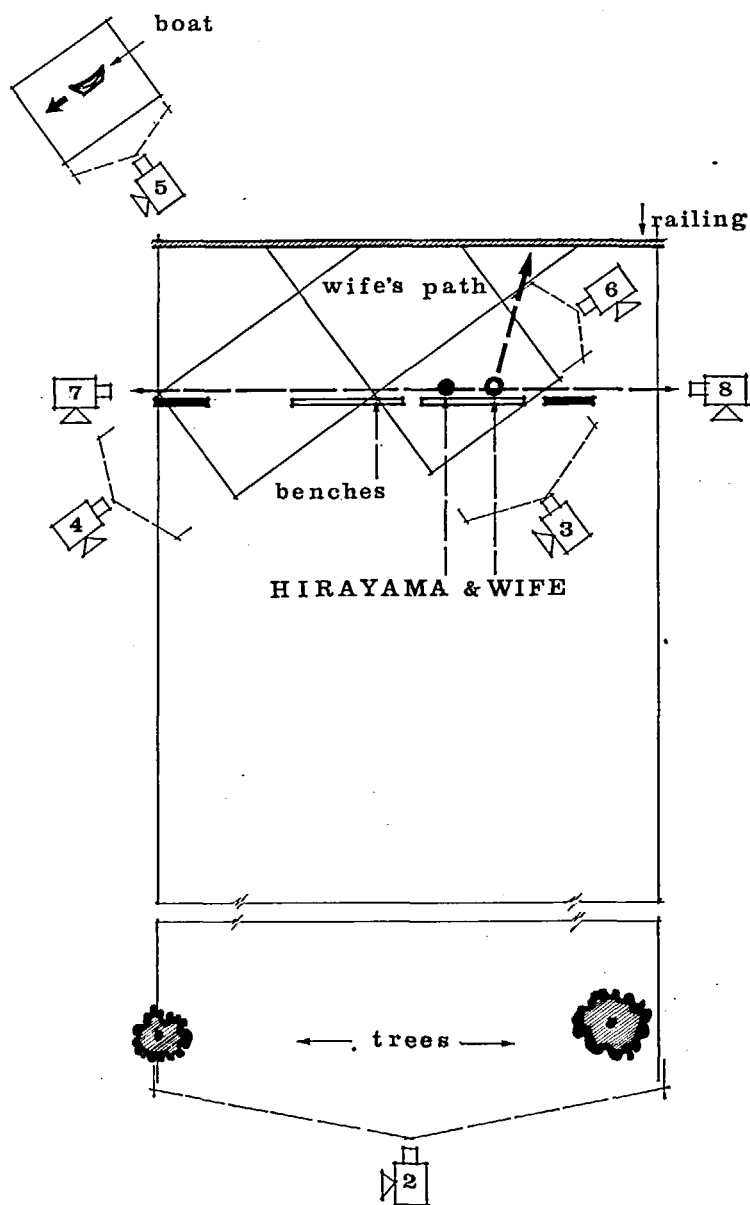
FAMILY OUTING
PLAN VIEW   2-8

FIGURE 4

The scene ends with a preliminary repetition (3, 4): the mother walks to the railing to wave to Setsuko – as she did in the opening set-ups of the scene. Then those opening set-ups appear in reversed order as Hirayama walks to the railing (3, 4, 5, 4) where both wave to Setsuko. In terms of the narrative the mother has acted to mediate[3] between father and daughter at a *spatial* level:" she has drawn Hirayama into a new space – the railing – in order to create a certain contact or relation between father and daughter. At a spatial level the contact is of a most tenuous kind, for the space of the daughter (set-up 5) is the only space in the scene which exists solely by virtue of a directed eyeline (a glance, a wave)

11   12
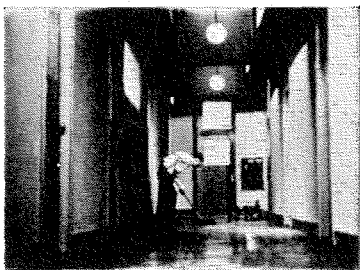
13   14

(figure 4). As previously remarked, the only difference between the two shots of the daughter is that in the second her boat is somewhat further from shore. This is the final outing that the family will take together prior to Setsuko's marriage. In the next scene the father learns that Setsuko plans to defy him, reject the arranged marriage, and marry another man.

Set-up 3 of the bench does not recur in the end sequence because Hirayama and his wife have moved from the bench to the railing and would not be visible even in the background (figure 4). Here the formal pattern actually serves to reinforce their absence from the bench, since it calls to mind that very image (set-up 3 – the

3. In *Equinox Flower* compare also the mediation of the maid acting between visitors and the family; of Yukiko between Hirayama and Setsuko; of Mrs Sasaki between Hirayama and his wife; of Hirayama between Mikami and Fumiko; and there are many other examples.

empty bench) which has not reappeared where expected in a larger
context or pattern of editing (3, 4, 5, 4, –, 2, –).

Set-up 1 – the final shot – also does not recur in the end
sequence. In its place appears the shot of an office hallway which,
however, is similar – in graphic terms – to the framed spaces
marked out at the beginning of the scene (home hallway, tree, two
trees – set-ups A, 1, 2 – stills 11, 12, 13) and repeated at the end
(two trees, office hallway – set-ups 2, B – stills 13, 14). The
repetition of these framed spaces – particularly the two hallways
– serves to close formally the pattern of set-ups which constitute
the family-outing scene.

Another common instance of the formal arrangement of camera
set-ups in Ozu films is the appearance of what might be termed a
'privileged' set-up. This is a set-up which occurs only a single
time in the scene and divides a long series of alternating medium
shots. The first Luna-Bar scene contains the following:

$$6\ 6\ 6\ 6\ 6\ 6$$
$$7\ 7\ 7\quad 7\ 7\ 7$$
$$9$$

Another privileged set-up (7) occurs in the Mikami scene (figure 2).

A third strategy that permeates Ozu's editing – along with the
spatial symmetry of a scene and the privileged set-up configuration
– is to force an object in the mise-en-scène to undergo formal
variation through a succession of shots by manipulation of the
camera set-ups. The last 13 shots in the first Luna-Bar scene feature
a white ashtray in the right foreground. Utilising a pattern of five
camera set-ups (17, 5, 17*, 18, 17**) (stills 15-19) Ozu makes the
ashtray appear and disappear and finally appear half on-screen
and half off-screen *always* in the right foreground. The repetition
is as follows (1 = appearance; 0 = disappearance):

$$(1\ 1\ 1\ 1\ 1\ 1)\quad (0\ 1\ 0\ 1\ 0\ 1)\quad (\tfrac{1}{2})$$

Many critics have noted that objects in an Ozu film exist not, as
in classical Hollywood narrative[4] in relation to a character or plot

---

4. The classical Hollywood narrative devours its objects. André Bazin
   (*What is Cinema? Volume II*, Los Angeles 1971, p 28) cites the
   example of a man locked in his cell waiting for the arrival of the
   executioner. The door handle of the cell exists so that it may be
   shown in close-up slowly turning. Lewis Herman (op cit pp 248
   and 246) advises screenwriters that 'Props are tools for action
   movement, story development, character development, acting aids,
   suspense, comedy, and for countless other purposes.' 'Props of
   all kinds should be introduced early in the story, developed as the
   story continues and, where possible, paid off at the end of the
   picture – a sort of pictorial gimmick, as it were.' In *She Wore a
   Yellow Ribbon* (Ford, 1949) we expect a yellow ribbon to be
   prominent in the narrative. By way of contrast, in *Equinox Flower*
   there is no reference whatsoever to an equinox, a flower, or an
   equinox flower.

but rather for themselves, in a phenomenological *thereness*. Barthes notes vis-à-vis the work of Robbe-Grillet (op cit, pp 13-17, 23-4) that when an artist withdraws from objects a sense of function (utility) as well as substance (inner relevance, quality, meaning, man) then what is left is only symmetry and formal arrangement – the object has no further resistance than that of its surfaces.

' Optical apprehension, which prevails everywhere [in Robbe-Grillet's work], cannot establish either correspondences or reductions, only symmetries.'

15

16

17

18

19

Though we may see an object being used in *Equinox Flower*, such as the turquoise towel (Hisako carries the towel into a room briefly near the end of the film) or the chair with the red cushion (at the end of the film, in a climactic moment, Setsuko's mother will sit in the chair), we have invariably also seen that object untouched – from multiple perspectives – through several earlier scenes. A red kettle in various locations appears in seven of the nine scenes in

Hirayama's home and only in the first scene is it actually picked up
and carried off. (More about the red kettle later.) Even the clothes
people wear are at times carefully shown apart from humans: they
are ironed, folded, or shown hanging on clothes lines. One is
tempted to observe that a certain formality extends also to the
performances in an Ozu film. Ozu demanded that acting be non-
expressive, opaque, one might even say ' atonal ' (for first hand
accounts of his handling of actors, see Donald Richie: *Ozu*, Los
Angeles 1974, pp 143-7). Even within the film, characters are
unable to penetrate the surface of other characters, to make deci-
sive psychological judgements. Hirayama, asking what kind of man
his daughter is in love with, is told that the man used to be a good
basketball player. Ozu's story is often constructed in terms of an
exhaustion of formal, logical possibility in a framework of parallel
anecdotes. *An Autumn Afternoon*, for example, concerns marriage
in various states: young married, old married, unmarried, never
married, newly married, about to be married or widowed.

It should be noted that what makes possible an attention to
nuance in the editing of Ozu is the fact that he employs only a
limited number of stylistic elements as background. We have
already seen, for example, that in general Ozu uses only three
different types of shot scales, employs no camera movement, and
restricts the number of new set-ups in a scene. (These tendencies
are even more pronounced in later films.) In short, spatial nuance
can appear only against the background of an overdetermined,
repetitious space. Otherwise the subtlety of variation is lost and
perception instead centres on the integration of new adjacent spaces
or, if this is not possible, on the existence of fissures or radical
discontinuities between spaces.

IV   Spatial Articulation

An overdetermined space depends on a system of continuity that
serves to anchor and re-anchor space within a scene. The spatial
continuity of Ozu has all of the rigour of classical Hollywood
cinema but contains fewer elements. There are, in fact, four
principles that govern the space within an Ozu scene.

First, Ozu utilises a 360-degree model of space[5] to generate
camera set-ups whereas Hollywood uses a 180-degree model.
Ozu's camera is not locked onto one side of a 180-degree line.
Secondly, Ozu usually changes camera position between shots by a

5. I am here using the concepts of 360-degree and ninety-degree space
proposed by David Bordwell in several courses at the University
of Wisconsin, Madison. The concept of lateral and rotational
spaces used below was also developed in conjunction with David
Bordwell and Kristin Thompson.

cut in

**

cut left or right

**

cut back

LATERAL CUTS
FIGURE 5

ROTATIONAL
CUTS

PLAN VIEWS

FIGURE 6

** new space

shared "

FIGURE 7

LATERAL & ROTATIONAL
CUTS   FIGURE 8

RADIAL CUTS
FIGURE 7

multiple of ninety degrees or by zero. He rarely uses intermediate
angles (but see the accompanying article by David Bordwell and
Kristin Thompson, p 59). Thirdly, Ozu shots are almost always
taken from a slightly low position, two or three feet from the floor
– the so-called *tatami* or kneeling position. Fourthly, Ozu slightly
overlaps adjacent spaces – and only slightly – so as to create a
bond or narrow band of commonality between the spaces.

The space of a scene is generally the product of one or both of
two types of cutting. Lateral cutting (figure 5) moves in one or two
perpendicular directions: in or out, left or right. Theoretically a
cut-in would not produce a new field of space as does a cut-back;
but in practice, because of Ozu's control of depth of field, mise-en-
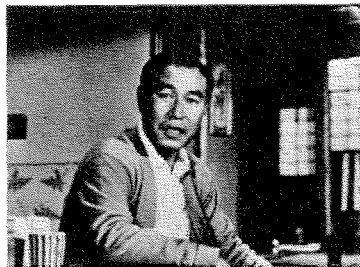scène, shot scale, etc, a cut-in normally opens new space. For

20

21

22

23

convenience, and because Ozu's camera usually remains at a fixed
angle and height, we ignore movement in the third spatial dimen-
sion, that of height.

The other major sort of cutting is rotational cutting (figure 6).
Note that in practice such cutting involves, for Ozu, a slight lateral
movement as well; in this way space is made to overlap on an
edge. Other more complicated spaces are the result of a combin-
ation of lateral and rotational spaces (figures 7, 8, 11).

We see, then, that Ozu partitions space so as to create a slight
overlap or margin between spaces. In the dinner scene, for example
(stills 3-6), a table and vase are the common measure between two
spaces (stills 3, 5 and 4, 6). In the noodle restaurant (figure 9)
the match from set-up 1 to 2 is carried by a (barely visible) hanging
red lantern; from 2 to 3 by a broader overlap of space (the cooks);

red lantern

1

shared
space

3

cook

* fat cook

hanging flaps

9

2 partition

table

5

HIRAYAMA

FUMIKO

6

red lantern

4
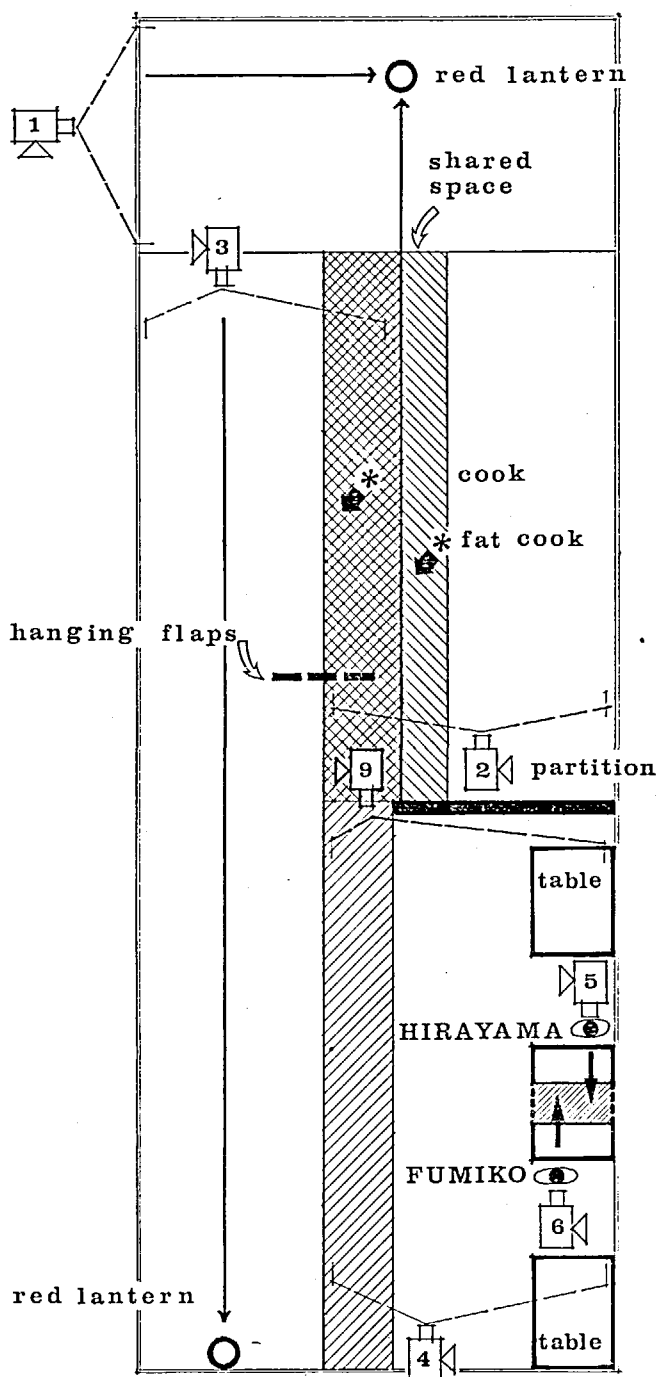
table

NOODLE RESTAURANT, PLAN VIEW. FIGURE 9

from 3 to 4 by one cook in the distance; from 4 to 5 by Fumiko
seated at a table (stills 37, 38).

The key, therefore, to Ozu's continuity is for the viewer to
recognise the shared space of two shots; stated another way, Ozu's
continuity forces the recognition of shared sub-spaces. Frequently
these sub-spaces are marked by a single object only. In Hirayama's
home (figure 10) four consecutive shots involve a red kettle which
pivots between different spaces: in shot 1 the kettle is on the
right; in 2, on the left; in 3, on the left; in 4, it has been ' replaced '
on the right by a red table and red can (stills 20-23). This sequence
in slightly different form is repeated later in the film.

Not only objects may reveal a shared space but also there may
be much activity along and across the shared space of two shots.

24
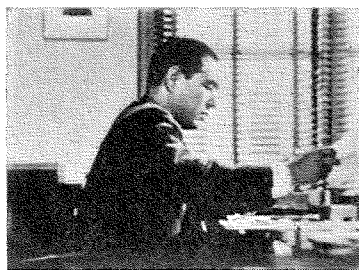
25

26
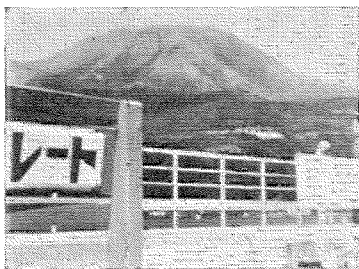
27

Ozu emphasises his partitioned space by repeated cuts on motion
of ninety degrees or 180 degrees. Even when the margin of com-
monality is a plane seemingly no wider than a playing card, we will
see the spaces joined by movement across the frame lines. Kondo,
for example, hands a paper to Hirayama across the shared space
of a simple lateral cut left (figure 5; stills 24, 25) and Hirayama
and his wife walk repeatedly between two spaces in the outing
scene (figures 1, 4 – set-ups 3, 4; stills 26, 27). The later example
illustrates one consequence of abandoning 180-degree space: there
is no systematic screen direction – Hirayama's wife exits right
and enters right.

More generally, we see that Ozu creates cubistic spaces. By
penetrating one spatial cube with another in different places, in
different amounts, and with mutually varying angles (multiples of

PLAN VIEW
FIGURE 10

2

4

*

3

red table & red can

red
kettle

door ⇨

1
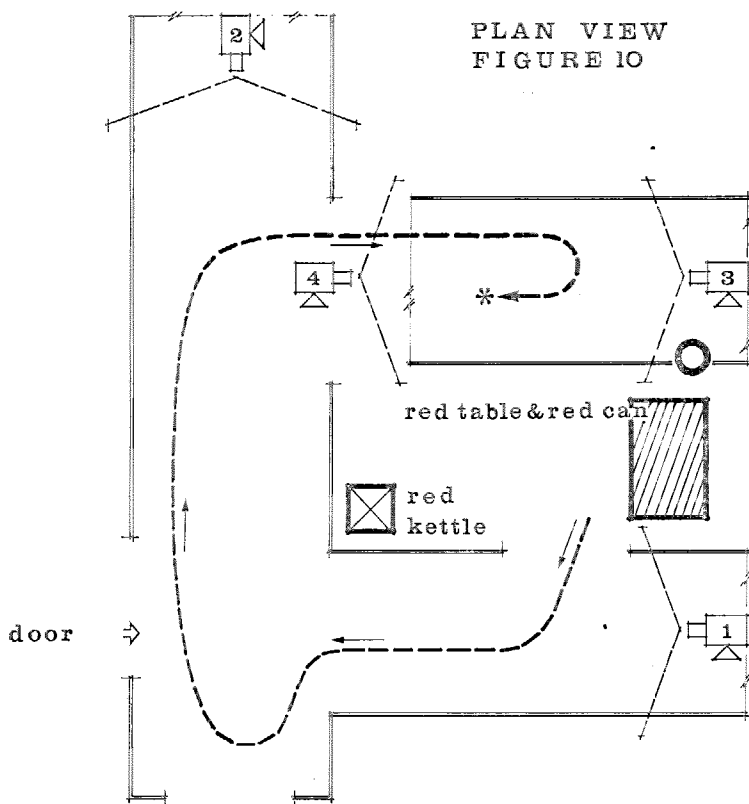
PATH OF HIRAYAMA THROUGH FOUR
SUCCESSIVE SHOTS
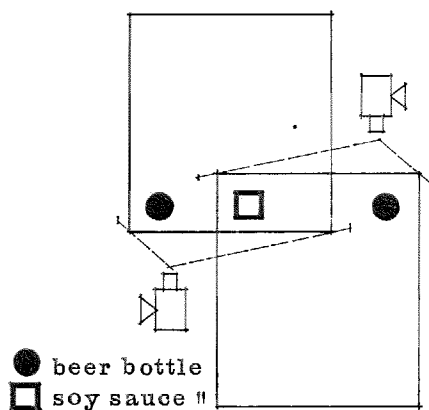
PLAN VIEW
FIGURE 11

● beer bottle
☐ soy sauce ‖

A SPATIAL ARTICULATION FROM
AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON

ninety degrees) he creates a staggering number of possible sub-cubes. An object caught in such a sub-cube – such as the red kettle – is examined from multiple points of view and itself becomes multiplaned.

Broadly speaking, then, Ozu's technique yields sub-cubes or margins of overlapping space. What are the consequences of the technique? There is a stress on objects. Earlier we examined this stress with respect to Ozu's editing practice. There is also a sense of depth and completeness not found in classical Hollywood films: Ozu reveals all the walls of a room and not just three. There is also a sense of balance, counterbalance, equality. When Ozu shoots six men working at a table, the alternating medium shots each contain three men.

28

29
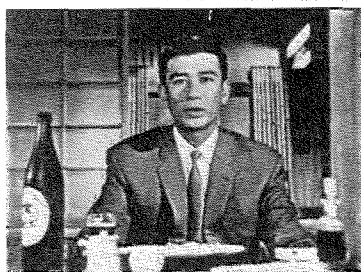
30

More fundamentally, the art of Ozu aims to insert the object or the person in a dialectic of space. For this reason a critic may speak of the ' independence ' of Ozu objects or exclaim how ' alive ' the objects seem. What is really meant is that an object does not posses a *single*, absolute relation to its space, but rather exists within a certain tension of space. Consider three extraordinary set-ups from *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962), which appear 4, 16, and 13 times respectively. There are no other set-ups in the scene. In the first three shots of the scene (stills 28-30) we see a soy-sauce bottle ' alternate ' from frame right to left to right while a beer bottle appears anchored at frame left with its label always turned towards camera in spite of the 180-degree cuts between the medium shots (stills 29, 30). One possible arrangement of the objects is shown in figure 11; another possibility is that the camera

occupies a plane marked by *two* soy-sauce bottles, one on either side (both containing the same level of soy sauce!) – one bottle for each man. The fundamental uncertainty (contradiction) of the space is its most salient characteristic.

Such a spatial articulation in the classical Hollywood cinema would be a scandal. In the classical cinema, the top of the table would be contrived so that the soy-sauce bottle would exhibit a single, unambiguous relation to its space. Ozu, on the contrary, blocks such a unitary conception of space in favour of a dialectic of space. The soy-sauce bottle cannot exist with respect to a single beer bottle but must exist in relation to two beer bottles, to a second soy-sauce bottle on a far table, and – perhaps even – to a third soy-sauce bottle on the same table. These relations are not evident at the level of the single shot but must be grasped as the complex interaction of three shots. Thus objects (and persons) for Ozu are seen not as subordinate to, or reflecting, a theme or ideological stance, but as a complex organisation of space that reveals not meaning in the ordinary sense, but geometry and symmetry in a state of tension.

V   Graphic Space

For Ozu, objects in space are containers not of an essence or even function but bundles of graphic, surface qualities which create geometries: line, shape, colour, angle, size, mass, volume, texture, plane, and the like. These qualities while being systematically explored not only mark out the dimension of space – cue our perception of space – but are also capable of reacting on the space, and defining a new sort of space. In the first Luna-Bar scene in *Equinox Flower,* for example, we see a pink lamp and a red telephone in the left background. Ozu cuts in, rotates 180 degrees, and contrives the shot so that in the immediate foreground the pink lamp is at the right but, surprisingly, the phone is split away from the lamp, and *remains* at frame left. The pink lamp has changed position in the frame – from frame left to right – in accordance with our spatial expectation – a 180-degree reversal of space. The red phone, however, has seemingly defied a three-dimensional conception of space by holding its position. Though the phone is not spatially continuous it is graphically continuous – the redness of the phone remains in the same place within the frame. Thus Ozu pries loose a graphic quality – redness – from its three-dimensional reference. This does not, of course, block our recognition of three-dimensional space so much as offer a certain resistance to that space and open up – or reward – our perception of the film image as a two-dimensional surface: that of frame height and width.

Across this surface, then, the graphic elements of Ozu are free to operate. The dimension of frame width is explored perhaps

most of all in Ozu films. This exploration – which is systematic only in the later films – may be described if one simplifies a bit. Consider only two possible movements: first, an object which moves from frame left to right (a reversal) *with* the cut and, secondly, an object which remains at frame left or right *in spite of* the cut (a stasis). It should be noted that our ' natural ' inclination is to ' follow the angle ' and expect an object to change location with a shift in angle (eg 180 degrees). In the course of an Ozu film, however, one must also train one's perception to *stay* with space, to discover correspondence by overlap.

With the above two possible movements there may be coupled three possible types of objects: a single object, two identical objects – each seen in only one shot – or two ' similar ' objects – each seen in only one shot. By ' similar ' I mean that the objects share only one graphic quality, such as shape or line. Thus with two types of movement and three types of objects there are six basic patterns with which to explore the frame width.[6]

Illustrations of these possibilities in *Equinox Flower* are:

1. One-Object Reversal: the vase in the dinner scene (stills 3-5); the red kettle (stills 20, 21).
2. One-Object Stasis: the ashtray in the first Luna-Bar scene (stills 15-19); the centrepiece bowl in the dinner scene (stills 33, 34); the red kettle (stills 21, 22).
3. Two-Identical-Objects Reversal: two pairs of bottles in the noodle restaurant (stills 37, 38).
4. Two-Identical-Objects Stasis: the corners of two chairs in the Mikami scene; two overhead lights in the noodle-
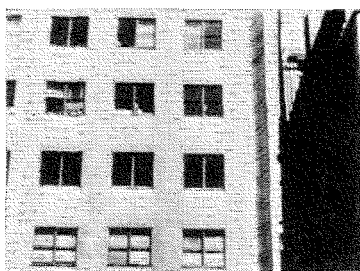
31   32

6. In order to speak of the graphic match as a structural principle, there must exist the structural possibility of a *non*-match of graphics. And indeed one can find in *Equinox Flower* instances of such non-matches. Ultimately the non-match reduces to empty space, empty of graphics. Ozu's use of empty space within the frame, however, is beyond the scope of this investigation. An example occurs at the start of the reunion scene in *Equinox Flower*. We see five men exit from the room leaving seven men variably spaced around the dinner table. These empty spaces – like the vacant spaces between the branches of a flower arrangement (the Japanese concept of *mu*) – are used to structure the graphic composition of the scene.

restaurant scene (stills 7, 8); the peanut cans in the
dinner scene (stills 33, 34).

5. Two-Similar-Objects Reversal: the red kettle is replaced
by a red table and red can (figure 10; stills 22, 23); a
wallpaper design of green ferns becomes a living fern.

6. Two-Similar-Objects Stasis: a vertical beam behind
Kondo becomes a vertical space between buildings; next,
three windows on the face of one of the buildings become
three pictures on a wall (stills 31, 32).

A special site for graphic movement in width is an Ozu dinner
table – in a restaurant or at home. In the family-dinner scene, a
red-striped can of peanuts always appears in the left foreground
in spite of right-angled cuts between three people resulting in four
different medium shots involving the can. For instance, a set-up
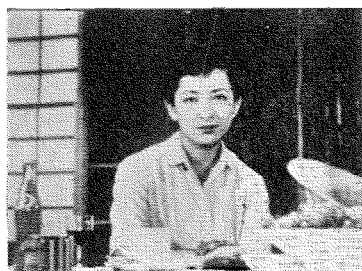
33   34

of the mother (still 33) alternates with one of her daughter Setsuko
(still 34). The peanut can and the centrepiece bowl, however, do
not change position in spite of a 180-degree shift in angle. (Note
the graphic ' equinox ' of still 33 – the level of half-filled glasses
matches the height of the centrepiece bowl.) The peanut can, in
fact, serves to anchor a larger circulation of graphics across the
table.

35   36

A viewer's mind can become quite unwired in an attempt to fix
the geography of an Ozu dinner table (not to mention the fruit in
a centrepiece). Bottles, glasses, cups, dishes, vases, centrepieces
shift about in the image because of the editing – marginal, cubistic
space (for example, figure 11) – and the acknowledged cheating of

object continuity to further graphic continuity (see Richie: *Ozu*, op
cit, pp 125-6). In the noodle restaurant, for example (figure 9),
there is a graphic match on a red lantern between set-ups 2 and 3
which is *only* a graphic match — it carries *no* spatial continuity.
Later in the scene we watch as a beer bottle and glass exchange
positions on the frame lines while two small bottles appear and
disappear on the left frame. Thus Ozu's tables are the occasion for
what might be called a dance of the bottles. If one could visit
such a mythical table, one could feast forever since food and drink
would continue to multiply around the table.

A more complicated use of the two-dimensional surface of the
film image is the diagonal construction that operates through four
successive scenes in *Equinox Flower*.[7] In the first Luna-Bar scene a
set-up of Kondo (still 35) alternates with one of Hirayama (still 36).
A diagonal is formed by pink lamps, Kondo's head, a pink lamp,
and red phone; a diagonal in the opposite direction is formed by
Hirayama's hands, a white horse, bottle, and Hirayama's head. In

37   38
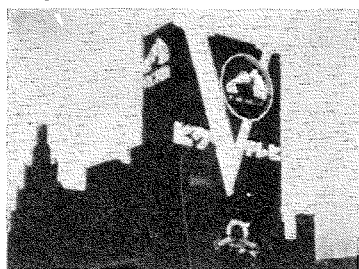
39   40

the noodle restaurant a diagonal is formed by two bottles of
uneven height which are behind Fumiko (still 37) and in front of
her (still 38). At the end of the scene three bottles of uneven height
are behind Hirayama, who is now alone, and three are in front of
him (still 39). In these two scenes Hirayama confronts the daughter
of a close friend who has left home to live with a man and work

7. On diagonal composition in Ozu see Richie: *Ozu*, op cit pp 132-4.
   Richie's book should be read with great caution. It contains many
   factual mistakes in the description of the films. See also Rosenbaum,
   op cit.

in a bar. In the next scene Hirayama angrily confronts his own daughter and demands to know if she is sleeping with her boyfriend. The scene concludes with a shot of the RCA building as a giant ' V ' lights up from bottom to top (still 40). A second confrontation with Fumiko follows with diagonals alternating in the manner of the previous Luna-Bar scene (stills 41, 42).

41   42

More generally we see that when the Ozu image is considered as a flat surface, it becomes a mosaic of line, colour, and shape. These graphic forms we usually recognise as an arrangement of objects – a red phone, a red-striped peanut can, an ashtray, a red kettle, a soy-sauce bottle – whose logic is not that of a three-dimensional space, but of pure form. It is important to remember that such a two-dimensional mosaic, though without the cues of linear (or other) *perspective*, is nonetheless a space – implying position, direction, movement, relation, and so forth. By allowing graphic elements to define a flat space, Ozu motivates an awareness of the entire frame and not just the centre of the frame (and central perspective), which is all that is usually demanded by classical Hollywood film.

VI   The Spatial Code

Style is a set of laws – a system – that produces formal transformations of the materials of the art medium – in film broadly Metz's five matters of expression (see *Screen* v 14 nn 1/2, Spring-Summer 1973, p 90). The result – the trace – of style is structure. The formal transformations most evident in the structure of film occur at the level of graphics – the display of its physical qualities. The play of lines, colours and objects, however, is in actuality only the consequence of fundamental shifts in space. In day-to-day life, after all, a red kettle does not leap about and ' change into ' a red table and red can. The red kettle is a cue for space. The manipulation of this space by the film medium is, in fact, so fundamental that it represents a narrative code on the level of the narrative codes Barthes uses to analyse *Sarrasine* in *S/Z*. In a literary

work space can be mapped out only in terms of secondary codes.
For example, descriptions in literature incorporating the words
'left' and 'right' are based on something like Barthes' cultural
code; that is, the code summons our experiential knowledge of the
direction of our left hand and our right hand. But in film, because
it is a visual art, space is perceived – sensed – directly.

Nevertheless, this direct perception of space in film is a coded
construction. The code begins with the cues of monocular depth
(the cues of classical painting) – overlap, linear and size perspective,
familiar size, illumination direction, etc. (A summary of thirteen
spatial cues appears in Edward Hall: *The Hidden Dimension*, New
York 1969, pp 191-5; see also ch VII: 'Art as a Clue to Perception',
pp 77-90.) But these cues do not exhaust the spatial code. The
cinema has added powerful cues of its own, notably camera (dis-
tance, angle, lens, focus, camera movement) and editing. The early
Russians – Eisenstein, Vertov, Kuleshov and others – were pioneer
explorers of the theoretical and practical aspects of the spatial code.

All the above cues, then, are spatial signifiers, spatial indicators.
More precisely, the spatial signifier is an event, a cue, which has
as its signified a spatial RELATION. If we see, for example, two
objects one of which is partially obscured by the other – the cue of
overlap – then the spatial relation which is suggested is that the
obscured object is further away (and behind) the other object.
Through the operation of spatial cues (some in combination, some
in opposition) spatial *relations* are forged (implied, contradicted)
among objects and persons: thus we perceive a space that has such
and such dimensions, that contains objects and persons related in
such and such a way, that is related – most importantly – to nearby
(other) spaces in such and such a way. The spatial cues uniquely
provided by cinema certainly create spatial relations: such as, a
man related to a nearby bowl of soup through editing. The opera-
tion of certain cinematic signifiers of space is exactly what we have
been considering in *Equinox Flower*: shot scale, reframing (incre-
mental variation), the camera set-up, editing (in the sense of
spatial articulation), and the graphics of mise-en-scène.

Moreover, when the spatial signifiers are given wide play – as
opposed to what are known as 'static, theatrical' films – the
cinema creates spatial relations that implicate an ever expanding
set of spaces in a process akin to what Barthes in *S/Z* (op cit,
section XL) calls a 'metonymic skid' of space: each space adding
to its neighbour some new trait, some new departure. It is at this
point that a film becomes 'spatial', that one of its narrative acts
is the creation of space. The expanding (contracting, pulsating)
array of related spaces is as much a part of the film text as the
characters, their movement, their words, and constitutes a narrative
in combination with them. An earlier discussion, for example, indi-
cated how the spatial aspects of the family-outing scene in *Equinox
Flower* – the formal arrangement of set-ups, the unique space

created by eyeline – form a narrative of family contact and distance. In a more fundamental sense, there are no spatial cues in film except filmic cues. The reason is that everyday cues of space – such as linear perspective – are transformed when taken up by the cinema. (Witness the creation of linear perspective from stills 1 to 2.) The space which appears juxtaposed in two shots of a film is unlike any space on earth. If one could visit the office building in Japan where Ozu made *Equinox Flower* (assuming such a building exists!) and walk its halls, one would still be unable to reconstruct the space of the film, the space implied by the film. That space exists only at twenty-four frames per second.[8] The impact of Eisenstein's shot scale in *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) when he cuts in along a line is, according to the spatial code, an implosion of space that has no basis in the everyday world. Even the classical film – which aims to create 'spatial continuity', ie the sense of a three-dimensional surrounding space endowed with independent existence ('natural' space/time) from which a sequence of shots has somehow been excerpted – creates its space carefully and painstakingly, with attention to a great many conventions (spatial codes). In short, film is a constitutive medium where non-filmic (pro-filmic) reality is radically transformed (de-familiarised) by the medium. The spatial code of film invites one to perceive space in a new (old) manner.[9]

In the films of Ozu the transitions are the site of almost pure movements of the spatial codes. The understanding of a transition depends not on assigning the transition, or one of its spaces, the meaning of another code (such as by consuming the space in a causal chain), but on the realisation – gained by 'following' the matches – that the transition is a code apart from the others. For the viewer, the Ozu transition is a purely spatial experience. It is this foregrounding of the spatial code in Ozu's films that justifies us in classifying Ozu as a 'modernist' film-maker.

Conclusion

Ozu Yasujiro in *Equinox Flower* develops a spatial code which is quite different from that of classical Hollywood's 'spatial con-

8. See Burch, op cit ch 3 'Editing as a Plastic Art', pp 37-40. At a more theoretical level Umberto Eco shows that meaning does not depend on real-world objects and referents in *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington, Indiana 1976, pp 58-72, 161-71.
9. For the classical film see Burch, op cit p 39, and Karel Reisz and Gavin Millar: *The Technique of Film Editing*, 2nd ed, New York 1968, section 3, 'Principles of Editing', pp 211-72. In *Late Spring* (1949) – one of the most noteworthy films in the history of the cinema – Ozu boldly transforms the space of the famous fifteenth-century garden of Ryoanji in Kyoto. In the Japanese culture the garden represents a supreme spatial achievement.

tinuity'. This in no way means that the spatial articulations of
Ozu are superior to those of classical Hollywood cinema: rather,
Ozu's system of spatial coding is merely *another* system, one of
many possible systems. We have noticed that as part of his system,
Ozu chooses a different set of shot scales (three) and organises
these elements in a structure quite different from the Hollywood
pyramid or crisis structure where a progression from establishing
shot to close-up concentrates psychological and causal energies.
Ozu's organisation of shot scales, on the other hand, tends to
retard a weaving or braiding of the codes so that at certain points
(the transitions) the text is emptied of meaning (the other codes)
and expresses only space.

Ozu then utilises in a systematic fashion minute camera refram-
ings and minute changes in mise-en-scène – incremental variations
– to reveal nuances in space. This gradually changing space is
related to an apprehension of time not as corruption but as an
inner process of objects. Further, Ozu understands that the pattern
of camera set-ups alone may become a large-scale form in the film.
Through rigorous camera placement networks of objects are created
which are opaque as to essence or function but reveal spatial
symmetry and geometry.

Ozu's general articulation of space is based on a 360-degree
model of space – rather than Hollywood's 180-degree model –
coupled with a system of right-angled (lateral and rotational)
cubistic space. The result is that the object or person is not locked
into a single, absolute relation with its space but rather exists
within a dialectic of space. Ozu even explores the possibility of
confronting a three-dimensional perception of space with a two-
dimensional mosaic of graphic qualities. Graphic patterns of
objects, in states of reversal and stasis, emphasise the material
surface of perception.

Finally it was suggested that all these aspects of spatial develop-
ment are, in fact, parts of a single code operating throughout film
– a spatial code. This code takes as its expression plane, spatial
cues, and as its content plane, spatial relations. The structuring
of space and spatial relations is a narrative act which for the viewer
is a spatial experience. The exploitation of the spatial code in
Equinox Flower and more generally in the work of Ozu confirms
that he was a modernist film-maker of the first order.

Why We Have Resigned from the Board of *Screen*

Members of SEFT and other readers of *Screen* may be aware that for some time an intermittent debate has been going on about the role which *Screen* should play in the development of film/television education. Recently that debate has intensified. Some disagreements with the direction *Screen* has been taking were .put forward in our statement ' Psychoanalysis and Film ' (*Screen* v 16 n 4, Winter 1975-6). Differences within the editorial board have now become such that the undersigned writers have felt unable to continue and have resigned.

The decision to resign hasn't been taken lightly. For several years now all four of us have devoted a good deal of our intellectual and political energies not only to *Screen* but to SEFT as a whole, so resignation does not come easily to us.[1] The reasons for our decision, we believe, involve matters of great importance to members of SEFT, and we are therefore presenting this statement.

First, something should be said about our conception of *Screen* and our sense of the situation in which it operates. We hold to SEFT's original project for *Screen* by which the Society eschewed the easy option of producing random accounts of classroom practice and ad hoc articles of film appreciation and stood out – against the immediate needs of teachers themselves – for a journal committed to the production of a body of knowledge and theory that would give film study its foundations. As we understood this project, SEFT was saying that while it did not expect *Screen* to produce work which could be immediately applied in the class-

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1. For the benefit of readers outside the immediate context of SEFT, three of us have been members of the Editorial Board of *Screen* since its emergence in its present form, three of us were long-term members of the SEFT committee, one of us was the co-editor of *Screen Education* for its first three years and one was chairperson of SEFT for three years.

and the concerns of teachers should always be present in the mind of the board and should inflect its work.

What are the general outlines of the cultural and educational situation in which *Screen* operates? Firstly, there has been a distinct growth of serious film/television study at several different levels of formal education (examples: the Inner London Education Authority's Sixth Form Course; the extension of film/television work in Further and Adult education; the existence of film and television exams at O Level and CSE; the creation of polytechnic and university teaching posts in film and television). Secondly, there is the growth of other groups, institutionalised or not, doing work in fields parallel or akin to those of SEFT (for example, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University, feminist film and media groups, independent film and video workers of various kinds, radicals within the state television services).

With this situation there now exists a serious audience/readership/participating membership for work on film and television and their relationship to education. This does not mean that deep-seated cultural prejudices about both the status of film and television and the value of theory have been triumphantly overthrown, but it does mean that there are the beginnings of a real basis for work.

Initially we think that *Screen* played a valuable role in helping create such a situation. However, we feel its role has increasingly become an ambiguous one, its positive contribution being counterbalanced by other factors.

Three Theses

1. Screen *is unnecessarily obscure and inaccessible.*
We regard this point as fundamental.[2] The obscurity so frequently present in *Screen* severely handicaps SEFT's general effort to develop film study and to make contacts with other groups who are committed to changing the ideas and political and economic structures which dominate and constrict British cinema and television. We regard such contacts as crucial, not only for the political strength they would give SEFT but because without them no adequate theory of film and television can be developed. We tried to say something about the nature of this obscurity in ' Psychoanalysis and Film '. We don't think it is an easy problem but we do think it an urgent one.

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2. It is reported that Brecht had a statue of a donkey on his desk. Around the donkey's neck he hung a notice which said ' Even I must understand '.

2. *The politico-cultural analysis that has increasingly come to underpin* Screen's *whole theoretical effort is intellectually unsound and unproductive.*

Again, we indicated in our previous statement our objection to an analysis that confronts one ill-defined monolith (classical or mainstream cinema, 'Hollywood-Mosfilm') with another (the passive audience) and leaves space only for the avant-garde. This lack of specificity and the inability to make historical distinctions (all forms of realism are simply collapsed into one general expression of bourgeois ideology which seems to have dominated in an unchanged form since the beginning of the 19th century – or the Renaissance?) raises serious questions about *Screen*'s professed Marxist orientation. And the implied rejection of all film and television which cannot be characterised as 'code-breaking' raises contradictions for a journal directed primarily at educationalists, since the vast majority of pupils will, for a variety of reasons, be confronted only by popular forms. These contradictions have not been examined. We should say also that it is the use of 'psychoanalysis as science' to support a recognisable and politically ambiguous ideological position (one we might call 'high bourgeois') that has forced us to critically examine the positions on psychoanalysis and science which have been assumèd.

3. Screen *has no serious interest in educational matters.*
In discussions on the board we found there was a general ignorance about education and particularly about educational theory.[3] This lack of interest is also demonstrated by the two theses above. No journal with an active interest in education could have allowed itself to remain as obscure and inaccessible rs *Screen* has been. Nor could a journal that was actively concerned with film/television education fail to ask itself some questions about a politico-cultural analysis which was so similar to the one which we have been trying to free ourselves from for so long. *Screen* even lacked interest in the educational activities of its own readers. The SEFT committee, concerned about how far *Screen* was being understood, organised a regular series of events (one-day conferences, week-end schools) which aimed to explicate and explore the kinds of issues dealt with in *Screen* and *Screen Education.* The majority of the *Screen* board were noticeable for their absence from these events and have been censured for this by the committee.

For quite some time now we have tried to get the problems of *Screen* discussed. Our decision to resign finally came because we could not get the rest of the board to concede that *Screen's* problems were urgent and needed action. When the Metz issue was

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3. This lack of interest can hardly be thought of as innocent since almost every member of the *Screen* board is a functionary of the state educational system.

published we initiated a discussion on the questions of obscurity
and inaccessibility. Three years later *Screen* is, if anything, more
obscure and inaccessible and we cannot even get the rest of the
board to admit that there is a problem. Disagreements about solu-
tions might have been productive; but when there is no agreement
that there is even a problem then the situation becomes unwork-
able.

There is one other powerful reason for resigning. Over the past
three years we have consistently been in a minority on the *Screen*
board (it should be said that this is so only because the board had
been constituted in an undemocratic and irregular way) and so
always under pressure. When we tried to maintain our objections
a sectarian atmosphere developed where dissent and scrutiny were
seen as lack of good faith, the positing of alternatives as liberalism.[4]
And as it became obvious that we needed to develop our positions
in a fuller and more positive way, that we needed to think through
our positions in relation to the amalgam of Althusserian Marxism,
semiology, psychoanalysis and avant-gardism on which *Screen*
drew, so it also became obvious that the *Screen* editorial board was
not the place to do it.[5]

To our knowledge, a large number of SEFT members share some,
at least, of our reservations about *Screen* in its present form. We
hope they will make their views known to the committee.

<div style="text-align:center">

EDWARD BUSCOMBE
CHRISTINE GLEDHILL
ALAN LOVELL
CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS

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4. Sadly the atmosphere on the *Screen* board seems to have become
   infected by Althusser's romanticism of the intellectual: ' Naturally,
   this term " intellectuals " denotes a very specific type of militant in-
   tellectual, a type unprecedented in many respects. These are the
   real initiates, armed with the most authentic scientific and theoretical
   culture, forewarned of the crushing reality and manifold mechan-
   isms of all forms of the ruling ideology and constantly on the watch
   for them, and able in their theoretical practice to borrow — against
   the stream of all " accepted truths " — the fertile paths opened by
   Marx but bolted and barred by all the reigning prejudices ' (Louis
   Althusser, *For Marx*, London 1969, p 24). It should be added that
   Althusser concludes this passage by saying: ' An undertaking of this
   nature and rigour is unthinkable without an unshakable and lucid
   confidence in the working class and direct participation in its
   struggles ', but this hardly has any relevance for *Screen*.
5. Readers wishing to pursue some of the issues raised here will find
   that other journals have to some extent taken them up: for example,
   articles by Daniel Dayan and William Rothman in *Film Quarterly*
   (Fall 1974 and Fall 1975 respectively), by Andrew Britton in *Frame-
   work* n 3 and by Chuck Kleinhans in *Jump Cut* n 9.

The resignation of Edward Buscombe, Christine Gledhill, Alan
Lovell and Christopher Williams is to be regretted. Each has made
an important contribution to the work of *Screen* and could
certainly have gone on to do so within the Editorial Board. Several
points in their statement of resignation are, however, misleading
and tend to confuse the real issues, with respect to the difficulties
of *Screen's* position, that both we and they wish to raise. Part of
the confusion is caused by the limitations of the Statement's
articulation of problems, part again by its overall strategy – the
latter perhaps inevitable given the context of an act of resignation.
The concern now must be to try to move towards a clearer and
more open expression of the issues at stake in so far as they bear
on the development of film theory in film education today. There is
agreement, we take it, on the need for the production of a body
of knowledge and theory able to grasp and inform film studies in a
way that maintains a political awareness of the contradictions
which that development can itself produce.

The account of *Screen's* history proposed by the statement is
underpinned by an assertively simple black-and-white thesis: over
the last three years *Screen* has witnessed a decline of which the
special number on Metz (v 14 n 1/2) marks the beginning and in
which the appearance of new – non ' original ' – members of the
Editorial Board is a contributing factor. This thesis is perfectly
coherent – though its formulation with regard to the irregularity
of the Editorial Board should not be left without clarification[1] –

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1. When SEFT was de facto part of the British Film Institute, the
   appointment of Editorial Board members was shared between the
   Executive Committee of the SEFT and the BFI Education Depart-
   ment, and on the appointment of Sam Rohdie as Editor, certain
   places on the Board were also put in the Editor's gift. These
   arrangements effectively lapsed when the Society's formal separation
   from the BFI became a real one in April 1972, but no others were
   instituted to replace them. New Board members were appointed
   in a number of ways, all more or less irregular; however, no
   objections were raised to these appointments in the Board or in the
   Society and new and old members worked together in all aspects
   of the Board's activities. When SEFT set about revising its constitu-
   tional arrangements in 1974, the EC ratified the existing membership
   pending the formulation of constitutional procedures for the appoint-
   ment of the Boards of its magazines. These have now been worked
   out and will be presented at this year's Annual General Meeting.
   The new Board members announced in the Editorial to this number
   of *Screen* (p 5) have been appointed by these procedures. Of the
   membership of the Board before the resignation of the signatories
   of the Statement, Edward Buscombe, Jon Halliday, Alan Lovell,

but its implications ought to be fully understood. The Metz number (in conjunction with the SEFT/BFI Educational Advisory Service seminars organised at the same time, with papers by Ben Brewster, Edward Buscombe, Stephen Heath, Sam Rohdie, Paul Willemen and Christopher Williams) *did* represent a decisive moment in the orientation of *Screen*'s work – not by closing off previous questions but by attempting to recast them within the terms of a more fundamental understanding of their implications (for this reason, amongst others, the Metz number has become *Screen*'s biggest selling issue). The extended presentation and discussion of Metz's analyses of the idea of cinema as a language took up the task of understanding film in its processes of production and articulation of meanings, emphasising from the start the necessity to engage that understanding with political problems of film and ideology. Christopher Williams had written in *Screen* in 1971 of the need for ' political cinema and cinema criticism ' to destroy the modes of recognition and mystification ' spawned ' in the spectator by film's ' impression of reality ' (v 12 n 4 pp 21-2) and a subsequent issue had sketched a diversity of approaches to ' realism ' (v 13 n 1); the Metz issue then sought to follow up and re-examine these questions on the new basis of a developing attention to the fact of film as a ' specific signifying practice '. Initially this was undertaken via translation and consideration of theoretical work being done (mainly) in France; later, increasingly, via work done by the members of the Editorial Board or stimulated by that work. Translations have been fewer since the Metz number. Hence the charge of ' parasitism ' is less and less ' appropriate ': v 16, for example, contained only two translated pieces, one of these being the text of a talk given by Raymond Bellour at the National Film Theatre during a visit to London and Norwich set up by *Screen*. This does not mean, however, that we will not continue to make available significant material in translation whenever it can help to advance our work – British film culture is not to be developed in isolation.

Something of *Screen*'s success in this theoretical undertaking (' success ' = an effective contribution to the development of film theory and analysis and to maintaining the urgency of political questions within that development) is demonstrated by the very articles cited by the statement in its final footnote, a rather disparate selection to which could be added the many other articles published over the last two or three years which use, extend and criticise *Screen*'s work. What Peter Harcourt recently called, at a conference on film education, ' the felt intervention of *Screen* ' is now a major point of reference in film theory debate in Britain and North America (it should be noted that many of *Screen*'s sub-

Christopher Williams and Peter Wollen became members in 1971, Ben Brewster, Christine Gledhill and Paul Willemen in 1972, and Kari Hanet, Stephen Heath and Colin MacCabe in 1973.

scribers and readers live and work abroad, especially in the USA). This effectiveness is reflected in a continuous rise in subscriptions and sales. It is in this context that the ' decline ' of *Screen* should be understood.

To say this is not to lapse into complacency. It is to underline the specific circumstances of the difficulties *Screen* faces, as well as to acknowledge that *Screen* has a responsibility to maintain the actuality of the theoretical debate and to avoid academicism (and *its* obscurity). The Statement, we believe, wishes to point to both these factors and to raise the problems of theory, education and *Screen*'s work accordingly. This must, however, imply that, as the four signatories themselves affirmed at the end of last year in a paper presented to the Executive Committee of SEFT, ' the main intellectual territory *Screen* should explore is that formed by Marxism, structuralism, semiotics and psychoanalysis . . . where ideas can be found that have the most relevance to the problems film educationalists have met '.

As we have already said, such an exploration will itself produce problems, for it generates answers in the form of new and difficult questions: thinking and working through from a Marxist perspective effective relations of theory and practice in the context of the existing educational system is hardly likely to be simple (Jim Grealy has indicated the contradictions in connection with secondary education in ' Film Teaching and the Ideology of the Educational System ', *Screen Education* 15). Nor is the development of the theoretical side of these relations likely to be any simpler. It involves an effective analysis of complex questions of meaning and positions for meaning in film and of the functioning of film in ideology, in particular ideological systems. Indeed, we divide from the four signatories here in that we do not believe that Marxism, structuralism, semiotics and psychoanalysis are a single territory, or even a number of territories, full of ideas to be applied; on the contrary, as ' professed Marxists ', we take Marxism in our situation to be a political commitment to a materialist analysis of the contradictions and determinations of capitalist societies and to the transformation of those societies. Within this commitment and given the direct concerns of *Screen*, we see our tasks as that of analysing film and television in all their effects, that of understanding the operation of those effects in ideology and providing educational strategies in consequence, and that of using this analysis and understanding to bring into focus the difficulties and terms of political cinema (this is the whole centre of discussion in the Edinburgh Festival Brecht Event transcript, v 16 n 4). Semiotics and psychoanalysis are important to us *in so far as* they can contribute to this multiple task, more by helping us to grasp the problems than by providing ready answers (' psychoanalysis is thus appropriated here as a political weapon ', v 16 n 3, p 6). In this connection, and again as ' professed Marxists ', we do not share

the account of the passive relation to knowledge repeatedly
advanced by the four signatories, for whom ' territories ' are always
ultimately sacrosanct, the domain of professionals (the film theorist
will be at best ' a well-informed amateur '), authorities who can
be quoted *as such* (' We cite Lévi-Strauss not to side with him
against Lacan but to show that substantial intellectual choices are
being made . . . ') and who should be left alone to settle their
sciences, the ' choices ' (we have no ' competence ' to make such
choices), before outsiders go looking for ' ideas ' (cf the four
signatories' previous statement ' Psychoanalysis and Film ', v 16
n 4, pp 120-1). On the contrary, we believe that effective know-
ledge is not a matter of fixed and settled sciences but is itself a
process of production within which object and theory are con-
structed and reconstructed. An understanding of film/television
in terms of the tasks outlined above is not to be gained by simply
accepting film as an object (nor likewise ' film study '). That object
must be dismantled by a constant confrontation with the problems
of the articulation and transmission of meanings (social and/or
individual) and of the operations of subject positions. Thus dis-
mantled, film and film study cannot be contained within the defined
limits of a professional specialisation. Hence it is to little purpose
to attack *Screen* writers for disagreeing with one another (the fact
that they are also attacked for holding some monolithic agreement
is the other side of the same confusion), for using psychoanalytic
concepts ' in different ways and for different purposes ' (p 126).
The point is that Brewster-Heath-MacCabe, Heath, Metz and
Mulvey in the articles singled out are engaging with the problem of
describing the general terms of the cinematic experience not from
the position of some already known and constituted knowledge
but from within a process of understanding. The contradictions
and differences produced are part of that process, of its possible
advance. The corollary of the four signatories' position is passivity,
waiting for the answer to come (no commitments can be followed
out while things are ' still controversial '). Since no science will
ever have ' resolved the problems ' in the ' decisive way ' expected,
one can only achieve the negative criticism of protesting that
controversy exists and, its counterpart, the actual pursuit of ideo-
logically established modes of practice: in his booklet *Don Siegel*,
for example, Alan Lovell runs over the inadequacies of semiotics
(inter alia) merely to lapse into the simple acceptance of ' practical
criticism ' (p 12).

In the light of these comments, we can perhaps turn to the three
numbered *theses included in the Statement*, taking them one by
one and offering one or two brief remarks:

1. The problem of ' obscurity ' is indeed crucial and has been
recognised as such by the entire Editorial Board. Nothing is gained,
however, by the footnote reference to Brecht, a reference which
itself obscures the real problem (in general, the footnotes seem to

114 be used to set up a kind of ground bass of innuendo). The same Brecht, if the argument has to be conducted in this fashion, was also wont to ask 'What good would it do for us to understand one another? The only hope is no longer to understand the organised rubbish piled up around us', meaning by this that understanding itself was political, was a directly political activity and not the response to some immediate openness of a transparent social unity. Understanding, in other words, has itself to be constructed or produced, it is not simple, and we ourselves continue to be unable to espouse a condescending stance to readers as passive targets – so many 'donkeys'? – for simplifications. Which is to say, moreover, that we have no simplifications. No one writes difficultly in *Screen* for the sake of difficulty; the difficulties come from the development of film theory within the perspectives mentioned above, from the fact that this development is a process. It is this that we recognise as a problem and it is this that we are determined to solve, not by simplifying but by an increased care in identifying and defining the points of difficulty, presenting them as clearly as possible and carrying them through as points of debate in the magazine. In this last connection, we are seeking ways to produce a critical relationship between contributors and readers that will be able to inflect such debate. One such way, which we have already initiated, is to hold open meetings after the publication of each issue.

2. It is hard to credit the criticisms as formulated in the second of the Statement's theses. No member of the Editorial Board has ever used the expression 'Hollywood-Mosfilm' in *Screen* (except Edward Buscombe, highly critically, in an article in v 16 n 3), while discussion of 'classical cinema' has been important in the writing of, for example, Christopher Williams: 'My own feeling is that classical American cinema derives from an ideology of naturalism but that this ideology has been mediated through a series of aesthetics that are not necessarily naturalistic in practice' (v 13 n 1, p 76). Williams's remark, in fact, provides just the emphasis that has been constant in *Screen* work: there is a dominant 'American-dominated cinema' (Williams's term again, v 12 n 4, p 7) about which generalisations can be made but that cinema must also be specified and distinguished in particular moments and uses of its history. The emphasis has been not on 'one ill-defined monolith' but, for instance, on the carefully defined and qualified possibility of a *model* in the following terms: 'between the single film and the remarks towards the characterisation of classic narrative cinema there may be a great many distinctions and qualifications to be made ("classic narrative cinema" has here the status of a model: no individual film *is* that model – in Hollywood itself the problem was always one of variation, the refashioning of the same)' (v 16 n 1, p 10). Equally, the avant-garde has never been assumed to be a 'monolith' – an article in the last issue indicated

some directions with regard to American independent cinema and   115
the Brecht Event tried to demonstrate and evaluate some very
different avant-garde practices in political cinema. (It is slightly
ironic, moreover, that the Statement should have it that space is
left 'only for the avant-garde' when Peter Gidal — perhaps not
one of the 'independent film workers' whom it has in mind as
the new 'serious audience' — has been attacking *Screen* for *not*
giving *any* space to the avant-garde and for wasting its energies
on Hollywood film.) The truth is that a number of positions are
represented on the Board and their sum effect has not so far been
the rejection of all film and television which cannot be characterised
as 'code-breaking'. What it has been, we hope, is an end to any
simple acceptance of 'popular cinema' — often, as Geoffrey Nowell-
Smith has shown (v 17 n 1, pp 28f), mapped on to a conventional
auteurism — as a non-contradictory value, whereas in 'Psycho-
analysis and Film' it is still maintained that to criticise popular
film and television, much of it Hollywood produced, is to criticise
working-class values themselves — by the same token Marx would
have been attacking essential working-class values in his critique
of the ideological role of religion and the family. This idea sets
popular film beyond criticism which can then only be seen as an
attempt to declare the audience totally passive. In this connection,
it was stated quite clearly at Edinburgh (v 16 n 4, pp 72-4, 78)
that the force of much of the theoretical work in *Screen* was to
avoid the undialectical conception of film on the one side, audience
on the other, and to try to explore the relation set up by a film
(and by cinema itself) as subject positions binding individuals into
the production of certain forms of totality, particular images. It
was also stated on the same occasion that this did not mean that
those individuals were passive but that both the contradictions
sustained by the lived relations of class position in a confrontation
with the meanings of film and the strategies of film to contain
those contradictions should and could be analysed. In film theory
and film education, we thus agree with Cary Bazalgette writing in
Screen Education that 'if students are not trained to ask basic
questions about the images that confront them, if they are not
asked to examine the knowledge and assumptions which they
already possess, they are being denied the opportunity to develop
the most simple and essential critical tools. They are being trained
instead to accept given definitions and, very often, given moral
postures as well' (10/11, p 14). To return to the example of Marx,
the point of Marxism was — and is — not to 'deprive' the working
classes of 'their values' but to analyse the terms of the appropria-
tion of values and to create the conditions for the possibility of
the development of new — transforming — values in struggle. Popular
cinema (an ill-defined monolith?) can only be demonstrated as
working-class value by showing its contradictions and the exploit-
ation and use of them made by the working class in given situations.

116 Moreover, the undialectical conception of audience and film pro-
posed in the Statement and elsewhere leads exactly and para-
doxically itself to the idea of a passive audience. If the audience is
simply active (outside contradiction), the film must be simply
passive, there is no relation of process between the two (no theory
of the subject in ideology and its production-reproduction) and
meanings are directly (unproblematically) available to an audience
without any activity on their part. This is the vision that emerges
in Alan Lovell's criticism, first in what look like *ex cathedra* decrees
as to the meanings that a film and hence an audience (and vice
versa) can be allowed to have (' Three strands can be discerned at
work in *Dirty Harry*', begins the account of that film in the *Don
Siegel* booklet, these being the meanings ' available ' to people)
and second in his advocacy of the extension of criticism into . . .
' *consumer* survey ' (' *The Searchers* and the Pleasure Principle ',
Screen Education 17, p 57, an article which lists ' *all* ' the ' pleasure
points ' of the film).

3. This thesis, it has to be said, hinges largely on invective and,
as always, this can be categorically refused: we are all of us
involved in education in our work and lives and we are not ignorant
of educational theory but *deeply critical of it in its present forms;*
we are all ' functionaries of the state education system ', as too
are the vast majority of SEFT members and *Screen* readers, and
since we find it difficult to believe that the four signatories are
claiming to be in a more ' innocent ' situation, the purpose of foot-
note 3 escapes us; our interest (though this is not quite the word
we would use) in educational matters is indicated in the positions
outlined above, by our work on *Screen* (which we take to be one
area of commitment to SEFT) and by the activities of every one of
us individually in a wide variety of contexts, though we do not
think it necessary or ' beneficial ' to list credentials.

We said at the outset that we regretted the resignation of the
four and we reiterate that regret. The resignation came in the
middle of a series of discussions initiated by SEFT (on the recom-
mendation of a committee composed of Stephen Heath, Christopher
Williams and two members of the SEFT Executive) within the
Screen Editorial Board and after agreement had been reached to
try to work together to clarify and advance the various issues.
We feel that the time has come to put an end to sterile polemic
which closes questions rather than opening them. Our commit-
ment now is to identifying and discussing issues constructively
for the readership of Screen, to making the contradictions *produc-
tive.* We hope that readers and members of SEFT will help us in this.

BEN BREWSTER   ELIZABETH COWIE
JON HALLIDAY   KARI HANET
STEPHEN HEATH   COLIN MACCABE
PAUL WILLEMEN   PETER WOLLEN

'New Hollywood Cinema'

As far as work on Hollywood cinema is concerned, *Screen* has
concentrated almost exclusively on 'the classical text', attempting
not just to supplement previous work – to 'add' semiotics and
psychoanalysis to mise-en-scène, genre and auteur theory – but to
recast the epistemological basis of film theory and therefore to
re-hierarchise, and in some cases displace, previous discourses.
Screen's work thus was (and is) to construct a materialist theory
of film. Therefore, to interrogate the problematic of that form
which dominated world production when cinema-going audiences
were at their quantitative peak, which remains the paradigm for
most TV fiction and which has attracted much of the best critical
work on film (*Cahiers du Cinéma, Monogram, Movie*) is obviously
a necessity.

However, the two aforementioned British journals have recently
devoted a good deal of their attention to articulating what they see
as fundamental changes in the Hollywood product, toward describ-
ing the context, themes and aesthetics of 'New Hollywood
Cinema'.

My intention in this piece is less to evaluate what has been
written (though it is worth saying, I think, that essays by Robin
Wood in *Movie* 21 and Thomas Elsaesser in *Monogram* 6 are par-
ticularly interesting) than to use some of the insights produced so
far in order to indicate ways in which *Screen* might engage, both
with contemporary cinema itself and with the critical discourses
which have sought to describe/theoretically constitute it.

Movie and *Monogram* have both pointed to what they see as
basic formal and thematic changes in the contemporary Hollywood
film. The use of devices such as the zoom and telephoto lenses,
slow-motion and split-screen have destroyed the dramatic and
spatio-temporal unity that founded classical mise-en-scène with
its economy, density and 'subtlety' of signification; plot-linearity
and its corollary, the goal-oriented hero, have been replaced by
narrative fragmentation and troubled, introspective protagonists;
genre conventions have to a large extent broken down, to be re-
placed by a 'realism' compromised by traditional dramatic values

and the exigencies of narrative conventions or a use of older generic conventions invested with an empty nostalgia or a knowing cynicism, or both.

Coupled with an examination of the new Hollywood rhetoric, *Movie* and *Monogram* have pointed to various socio-cultural factors which have been seen to some extent as determinants: the breakdown of censorship codes; the loss of a stable majority audience to television with a consequent creation of products aimed at various sub-cultural groups (this contributing greatly to the breakdown of stable conventions and themes); the collapse of the studio system and its replacement by the ' package ' system in which the director is more overtly institutionalised in a role analogous to author; the ' breakdown of confidence in traditional American values ', connected with events such as the Vietnam war, the race and student riots of the 1960's, Watergate, and so on.

Many of these points are both interesting and suggestive. The problem for *Screen* is how to determine their pertinence, how to arrange them in a hierarchy of importance within a framework governed by materialist principles. Since the work done in other journals falls broadly into two separate though obviously related spheres, those of aesthetics and the socio-cultural context, it is worth trying to make some points and pose some problems in each of these areas. To take the second area first, the most obvious point is that while the Hollywood production system remains capitalist, it has changed its nature.

The change has to be related to broader tendencies in the American economic system. One way of thinking about these tendencies has been through the concept of monopoly capitalism: the tendency of production, distribution and exchange units to become larger and larger. If this concept is correct, the development of the ' package ' system of production in Hollywood is an anomoly (whatever may have happened to the systems of distribution and exchange). However, the concept may be at fault. It may be more fruitful to characterise the development of the American economy as one in which finance.capital has come to dominate the system. This would obviously apply to Hollywood, where the package system is geared precisely to finance-capital interests.

The related question as to why the studio system disappeared is a crucial one, and relates both to the points raised above and to broader cultural, ideological and social changes. The position of hegemony attained by television has been proposed as crucial here, but this thesis has rarely been formulated in relation to ideology and the ideological function of both media. Where previously the cinema had been the main vector of ideology in the mass media, during the 1950's this role passed to television, in many ways a much more effective medium in this respect, with its presence in the home, continuous transmission, relative cheapness and so on. It is significant that this change took place during the

1950's. The early part of this decade was characterised by an ideological shift to the right, together with increasing pressure towards conformity and, consequently, support for the hegemony of the dominant ideology. Thus, in the films of the period, as is well-known, more liberal ideologies were coded very obliquely, either by using very ' formal ' means, such as strategies of mise-en-scène in the melodrama, or by using a ' displaced ' genre, such as the Western.

Since the ideological state apparatuses in a liberal democracy like America are relatively independent of one another – and in a state of competition – a well-documented battle for audiences ensued: hence the massive investment in spectacle in Hollywood at this time: colour, wide-screen, 3-D and stereoscopic sound either became the norm or were first introduced, with varying degrees of success, during this period (though in view of the recent work in *Screen* and elsewhere on the close connection between spectacle and ideology perhaps this should also be related to the fact that the early 1950's was a period of great investment in ideological hegemony generally: it is at least worth exploring).

What seems to have happened since television became the dominant medium is that the film industry has streamlined itself and sought (and/or been forced) to diversify its appeal and,' therefore, its product. One further factor contributed to this diversification. The 1960's saw the rise of the youth movement and the struggles for liberation of both blacks and women: the growth of counter-cultures and ideologies generally, some of which could be sought and appealed to as a potential audience which was not catered for by television (most notably the petty-bourgeois component of the youth and student movement in films like *Easy Rider, Two-Lane Blacktop* and *Alice's Restaurant*). It is not, of course, merely a question of Hollywood seeking an audience. The very pressure of these groups and ideologies meant that the media had to ' give ' at some point (even if this largely resulted in recuperation): Hollywood, certainly by the mid-1960's, was the weakest point.

Evidently, this is related to the breakdown of many of the conventions, themes and values associated with classical Hollywood, since large amounts of capital were no longer available for continued and constant investment in spectacle (thus cheaper techniques – like using a zoom rather than a tracking shot – became the norm) and since what were regarded as ' escapist ' and ' reactionary ' values in classical Hollywood were one of the prime targets of the counter-cultural groups. Thus, techniques and conventions were adopted from two cinematic spheres: the New Wave and the ciné-vérité movement. Quite apart from the fact that both provided relatively cheaper techniques, the latter provided the values of ' realism ' for those who rejected the artifice and ' escapism ' of the traditional product, the former those of Art,

sophistication and a ' realism ' of a slightly different kind (as well as difference and novelty, so important for the commercial cinema). As has been pointed out, the traditional aesthetic and ideological values continue to be embodied, most notably in the disaster-movie cycle. The massive investment in these films, their appeal in terms of spectacle and stars and their traditional rhetorical strategies and style all indicate their ' conservative ' aesthetic and ideological status. It would seem that these films are aimed at the audience largely lost to television.

This account obviously suffers from imprecision and lack of detailed research. Nevertheless, it provides a framework (historical materialism), some of the terms of analysis (finance capitalism, ideology, hegemony, cultural struggle) and a mode of linking material (dialectical relationships rather than unilateral causes, in a hierarchy governed by economic factors) with which to continue the work that needs to be done.

I would like to move on now to the modern Hollywood text as such (bearing in mind the different tendencies mentioned above), and its relationship to that of classical Hollywood. Here the work done in *Screen* provides a useful orientation. Fundamental to the classical text is the narrative, the governing discourse whose work-ings are described by Colin MacCabe as follows:

' The narrative discourse is placed in a situation of dominance with regard to the other discourses of the text. The narrative discourse does not just dispose the other discourses, it compares them with the truth or falsity transparently available through its own operations. The simple access to truth which is guaranteed by the meta-discourse depends on a repression of its own operations and the repression confers an imaginary unity of position on the reader from which the other discourses in the film can be read.' (*Screen* v 17 n 1, Spring 1976, pp 98-9.)

In dealing with the modalities of narrative in the contemporary Hollywood film, it is important to keep MacCabe's thesis in mind. It then becomes clear that the changes in the nature of Hollywood narrative, though real, are on the whole far less radical than they may appear. Where in the classical film the resolution of the narrative and positioning of discourses and spectator is re-marked by a very overt, often schematic plot resolution in which the restor-ation of an equilibrium is signalled on many codic levels (thus producing that effect of harmony – almost in a musical sense – so characteristic of the classical text) and the dominant protagonist(s) attain some kind of goal, many modern Hollywood films leave an impression of open-endedness or ambiguity. However, this is rarely the result of an avoidance of an ordering meta-discourse. More often it is the result of abandoning certain kinds of linear plot and those schematic elements of closure associated with the classical film. Ambiguity and open-endedness are sustained and articulated

within the limits of the dominant discourse, within the text. They are not of the kind likely to fracture the ' unity of position of the reader '.

This is not to say that contradiction is absent, either from classical or contemporary Hollywood films. Indeed, the system described by MacCabe is *founded* on a contradiction, that between process and position. Moreover, film-texts, like any other aesthetic objects, will also embody the contradictions inherent in any ideological system. The point is that the *work* of the texts is towards the elimination of these contradictions. Nor is reference to the reader in MacCabe's formulation designed to imply that all spectators are the same. The reader referred to is the one inscribed in the text. Any empirical audience may contain spectators whose education and cultural interests allow them to read a particular film as a ' Minnelli ' film or a ' Penn ' film. It may also contain spectators whose political and ideological orientation allows them to de-code a text in an ' aberrant ' manner. It remains, however, that he or she can only do so by employing codes and knowledge exterior to the text.

The point about the function of the meta-discourse as suggested here needs to be related to a seemingly contradictory point in Robin Wood's article on Altman in *Movie* 21. He contrasts modern Hollywood films, particularly those of Altman, with the classical films of Hollywood by drawing a distinction between the transparency of the latter as contrasted with the opacity of the former and its ' overt ' visual devices. This seems to be at odds with MacCabe's point about the ' transparency ' of the meta-discourse and hence my point above. However, Wood and MacCabe are dealing with two separate things, the former mise-en-scène, the latter narrative and/ as meta-discourse. The latter has nothing to do with the former. Stylisation and formalism can be contained within MacCabe's formulation of realism, which has little, necessarily, to do with ' windows on the world '. Systems of mise-en-scène are nearly always subordinate to the primary system of Hollywood narrative films which is that outlined by MacCabe above.

Where Wood's point *does* connect with the question of meta-discourse is in the fact that – especially in the work of a director like Altman – certain rhetorical strategies may to some extent mark the discourse as discourse, separate it from plot and diegesis in such a way that devices may appear unmotivated, ' self-conscious ' or ' subjective ' (at least in comparison with most classical films). However this is not to say that the meta-discourse reveals its own operations. In just the same way that the ' overt ' narrator in, say, the novels of George Eliot is apparent in moments of ' pure ' discourse, so with the ' overt ' rhetoric of an Altman film: there is no other discourse acknowledged *within the text* that can challenge its truth.

Lastly, I would like to turn to *Movie*'s and *Monogram*'s evalua-

tive attitudes to Hollywood, in particular modern Hollywood, as contrasted to tasks inherent in *Screen*'s problematic. Broadly speaking, in the former journals, classical Hollywood provides the critical and aesthetic standard against which to measure new Hollywood films. I think it is fair to say that for both magazines the phenomenon of 'New Hollywood Cinema' is regretted. Its films rarely come up to the standard (though this standard is formulated in different ways in the two journals). *Screen*'s relationship to classical Hollywood has been different. It has sought to theorise the ideological operations of the classical text. It has also sought, as has other work that shares its problematic, to detect progressive texts, texts which operate in some way to undermine the ideological functioning of the classical film. Hence the work on films by Sirk, Tashlin, Arzner, Tourneur and others. This work has, of necessity, been based on theories of the operations of the classical text. The changes that can be detected in the contemporary Hollywood film would indicate that, if this kind of work is to continue, it is necessary to theorise *its* operations. Its rules and meanings, and hence its gaps and spaces, must be understood before any fracturing of those rules and meanings can be detected. Some strategies seem now to be difficult to pursue. For instance, Claire Johnston's thesis in *Notes on Women's Cinema* that female stereotyping in the classical text allows those stereotypes to be played off against each other in a process of rupture, of 'making strange' patriarchal structures (notably in the work of Arzner), is a thesis which cannot apply to much of modern Hollywood, since many modern Hollywood texts, in seeking to produce an effect of realist characterisation in female roles, refuse the earlier conventions of stereotyping, often in a very conscious way (see, for instance, Christine Geraghty's article on *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* in *Movie* 22). On the other hand, narrative fragmentation and ellipsis may permit the engendering of unresolved contradictions or, as in *Night Moves*, the acknowledgement within the dominant discourse of some kind of limits to its access to truth.

STEVE NEALE

'Exploitation' films and feminism

The 'exploitation' film is essentially a commercial category, a market term for those films produced at minimum cost for maximum return which take up, 'exploit' the success of other films — replaying the themes, star-stereotypes and genres of more lavish, up-market productions. They are made with specific markets in mind, hence the development of 'sexploitation' and 'blaxploitatioi.' categories referring to the capture of the soft-core pornography film audience and black youth audience respectively. The limits of

tive attitudes to Hollywood, in particular modern Hollywood, as contrasted to tasks inherent in *Screen*'s problematic. Broadly speaking, in the former journals, classical Hollywood provides the critical and aesthetic standard against which to measure new Hollywood films. I think it is fair to say that for both magazines the phenomenon of ' New Hollywood Cinema ' is regretted. Its films rarely come up to the standard (though this standard is formulated in different ways in the two journals). *Screen*'s relationship to classical Hollywood has been different. It has sought to theorise the ideological operations of the classical text. It has also sought, as has other work that shares its problematic, to detect progressive texts, texts which operate in some way to undermine the ideological functioning of the classical film. Hence the work on films by Sirk, Tashlin, Arzner, Tourneur and others. This work has, of necessity, been based on theories of the operations of the classical text. The changes that can be detected in the contemporary Hollywood film would indicate that, if this kind of work is to continue, it is necessary to theorise *its* operations. Its rules and meanings, and hence its gaps and spaces, must be understood before any fracturing of those rules and meanings can be detected. Some strategies seem now to be difficult to pursue. For instance, Claire Johnston's thesis in *Notes on Women's Cinema* that female stereotyping in the classical text allows those stereotypes to be played off against each other in a process of rupture, of ' making strange ' patriarchal structures (notably in the work of Arzner), is a thesis which cannot apply to much of modern Hollywood, since many modern Hollywood texts, in seeking to produce an effect of realist characterisation in female roles, refuse the earlier conventions of stereotyping, often in a very conscious way (see, for instance, Christine Geraghty's article on *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* in *Movie* 22). On the other hand, narrative fragmentation and ellipsis may permit the engendering of unresolved contradictions or, as in *Night Moves,* the acknowledgement within the dominant discourse of some kind of limits to its access to truth.

STEVE NEALE

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The ' exploitation ' film is essentially a commercial category, a market term for those films produced at minimum cost for maximum return which take up, ' exploit ' the success of other films — replaying the themes, star-stereotypes and genres of more lavish, up-market productions. They are made with specific markets in mind, hence the development of 'sexploitation' and 'blaxploitation.' categories referring to the capture of the soft-core pornography film audience and black youth audience respectively. The limits of

the category are hard to place. For the purpose of the present argument the term is used to designate Hollywood ' trash movies ' generally (until recently that is) considered unworthy of serious critical attention because they are low-budget ' B ' features made quickly and cheaply in order to make as much money as possible.

Exploitation films present serious problems for feminists. They have generally been seen as produced exclusively by men for the male market. Whether or no this is true in a simple empirical sense, they depend for their financial success on an overtly coded, fetishised image of woman as sexual object: a stereotype always strenuously opposed by the women's movement in its desire to destroy old patriarchal myths and replace them with new images of women as active subjects in society and history. One of the symptoms of this desire to throw off the forms and language of the dominant ideology has led to the rejection of the stereotypes and codes of Hollywood cinema in favour of the alternative language of realism: that is, the representation of women in the ' reality ' of their oppression, replacing the manipulative, false patriarchal ideology with the ' true ' ideology of feminism in an attempt to rediscover the voice of women lost beneath the solidified surface of the stereotype. Recently, however, a body of work emerging from the Marxist-Feminist current in the women's movement, manifested in a growing interest in the re-reading of Freud by Lacan, has raised the problem of language in a different way, questioning the possibility of direct expression and insisting on the contradictory relationship between the language of the dominant class and that of oppressed groups. In so far as any stereotype represents the attempt by the dominant class to produce a universal popular language, equally valid for everyone, it is a political fact, and the desire to struggle with it marks the wish to change from the old to the new: to subject the timeless ' Truth ' to the process of history. If we attempt to deny the reality of the stereotype, to bypass the forms of the language of the dominant class, we place ourselves outside the historical struggle in the realms of the ideal world of narcissistic identification.

Until recently feminist film-making in this country has relied heavily on the techniques of direct realism in its attempt to establish an alternative feminist language of film. Interview material predominates, reinforced with synchronised sound which appears to emanate naturally from the image. The oppression of women appears as a self-evident ' truth ' which the viewer can only accept or reject because he or she is not involved in the process of criticism and analysis at the point of consumption of the film.

The Amazing Equal Pay Show (London Women's Film Group, 1974), a film made politically (ie collectively, with great difficulty, outside the dominant system of production) by a group of women film-makers who are concerned to make a radical intervention in the forms of dominant cinema, marks an important break in the

theory and practice of feminist film-making in that it not only refuses the notion that it is possible to counteract the representation of women in male-dominated systems of production by simply replacing it with films made from the ' women's viewpoint ', it challenges the whole idea of ' women's viewpoint ' as pure feminist discourse, or coherent world-view. It prefers to present itself in a mixture of conflicting forms (eg documentary realism v stereotypes, narrative continuity v didactic episodes) which attempt to break up the coherence of the forms of the dominant ideology, thus ' creating trouble ' among those forms. The film becomes part of a process of learning and struggle towards feminist consciousness rather than assuming the feminist position as given, a ' truth ' which can simply be set against the ' falsity ' of the dominant ideology.

It is in the context of struggle, of the uneven development of political consciousness that women can recognise the necessity to work on many levels at once in our desire to create a feminist film culture. *The Amazing Equal Pay Show* makes an important intervention for a relatively small (hopefully increasing) number of people. An important part of its polemic is its mode of distribution: through alternative channels to those offered by commercial cinema, though still remaining within the capitalist mode of production in so far as it determines film as a commodity possessing exchange value and governed by the laws of the market. Distribution of the film is backed up by discussion between film-makers and audience. In this way the relationship of the audience to the film is constantly shifted and disturbed to allow for criticism and analysis in the process of consciousness-raising.

The struggle for alternative modes of production and distribution by feminist film-makers is a crucial priority for feminist politics. What still remains, however, is the problem of a much wider audience for which commercial cinema is the main diet. In spite of changes (eg the break-up of the Hollywood studio system and the growth of smaller independent production companies, or the development of alternative production and distribution channels under the impact of a 16· mm technology in the States) the capitalist mode of production is still dominant, and continues to assert itself as universally valid for everyone through the forms it uses (narrative coherence, stereotypes, genre conventions), forms which are naturalised and effaced in mainstream Hollywood cinema, but which perpetuate the same myths nevertheless. While it is clear that these naturalised forms may be less offensive to women than the blatant use of the forms of the exploitation film in *Truck Stop Women* (Mark Lester 1974) or *Caged Heat* (Jonathan Demme 1974), it is also clear that naturalised forms represent an attempt to efface and suppress contradictions, whereas the overt manipulation of stereotypes and genre conventions allows us to see that language is at work: myths are revealed as ideological structures

embedded in form itself. In fact, exploitation films are potentially less offensive than mainstream Hollywood cinema precisely because of their resistance to the ' natural ', and the way they offer the possibility of taking a critical distance on the metalanguage of mainstream cinema. This has been the basis of the interest taken by avant-garde film critics in the radical potential of those ' trash ' movies which attempt to utilise the basically conservative conventions of the exploitation film.

Stephanie Rothman is a woman film-maker who makes films specifically for the exploitation market. Her films are widely shown in women's film festivals for their feminist interest, and yet they are perhaps the most difficult of any women's films to justify in terms of feminism, relying as they do on the codes and conventions of soft-core exploitation genres. The production conditions for Rothman's films could hardly be more capitalist and patriarchal. After graduating from the University of Southern California where she followed the programme in cinema, she obtained a Director's Guild of America directing fellowship and seems to have moved straight into working as assistant to Roger Corman, veteran Hollywood director and producer of small-budget ' B ' features costing between $200,000 and $300,000 and generally shot in a matter of weeks. Many young film-makers were given their first directorial assignments by Corman as head of American International Pictures in the 1960's and later as president of New World Productions which he started in 1971. Both AIP and New World are interested in film as a purely commercial product, as entertainment intended to reach and capture the widest audience possible. AIP has now become the major production company for exploitation films, and together with New World Productions the most consistently commercially successful. All accounts of New World Productions stress the father-figure of Corman, exerting a major influence in production values, while allowing his protégés a large amount of directorial control. The stress on film as commodity, the need to produce films as quickly and cheaply as possible has led to the exclusion in exploitation films of those production values which give mainstream Hollywood cinema its continuity: star actors, psychological realism and narrative complexity. The hall-marks of ' trash movies ' are bad acting, crude stereotypes and schematic narrative: it is precisely these elements which give the exploitation film its subversive potential. Corman is an exploitation merchant with leanings towards alternative culture, and it is for this reason that his films have something of a reputation for the way they allow a voice to repressed anti-authoritarian cultural forces. (Paul Willemen has indicated some of Corman's authorial concerns in the Edinburgh Film Festival 1970 book *Roger Corman: the Millenic Vision*.)

In fact, New World Productions has something of a reputation as a ' feminist ' company because of its consistent use of the stereotype of the aggressive positive heroine obsessed with revenge – a

feature Corman explains in commercial terms: the films which did best for New World were those in which the women decided their own destinies, and the super-assertive woman figure was developed as a response to a market demand. The positive-heroine stereotype is a common feature of New World films, often with a modern backdrop of an Asian or South American country in which a ' revolution ' is taking place. The aggressive heroine turns her aggression against the male world by parodying male violence, often raping, sometimes devouring her male victims. Guns, usually machine-guns are a common accessory for the New World woman.

The positive-heroine figure as developed here is based on the idea of putting the woman in the man's place. The woman takes on male characteristics, uses male language, male weapons. In their film *Penthesilea* (1974) Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen show how this image rests on the age-old myth of woman as Amazon queen, a warlike and destructive figure created in man's image, set apart from ordinary women and desirable only in death. Penthesilea's death symbolises the suppression of female desires at the moment of the institution of patriarchy: the erotic force of the image lies in the threat inherent in it that those desires will once again rise to the surface, and the female will take the place of the male. Thus while the positive-heroine stereotype rests on the possibility of woman becoming the subject rather than the object of desire, that desire is seen totally in terms of male phantasies and obsessions.

Nevertheless, the aggressive-heroine stereotype contains within it the idea of revenge, of turning the weapons of the enemy against him, an idea which is basic to the polemic of feminist cinema (see for instance Nelly Kaplan's films *La Fiancée du Pirate* and *Papa les Petits Bateaux* in which the heroines use the images bestowed upon them by their oppressors to destroy them). If the films of Stephanie Rothman are to mean anything to feminists it must be in terms of the ways in which they manipulate the stereotypes and codes of the exploitation genres to create new meanings for women.

Rothman has always worked closely with Corman, within the constraints of the New World genres. In 1970 she wrote and directed the first of his ' nurse ' films, *Student Nurses*, followed by the horror fantasy *The Velvet Vampire* in 1971, *Group Marriage*, a comedy, in 1972 and in 1973 the ' action ' film *Terminal Island* (UK title *Knucklemen*), all financed by Corman. She and her husband/partner Charles Swartz now have their own company – Dimension Films. While all these films contain the elements required by the exploitation market, there is enough evidence to suggest that Rothman has interests of her own. In *Student Nurses*, for instance, the four female protagonists each have a distinct stereotype-image, accompanied in each case by a certain style of film-making usually associated with that image. The structure of the narrative is episodic, and the playing off of the different styles

accompanying stereotypes. The inclusion of an abortion scene also
introduces a jarring note into the film. In *Terminal Island* a com-
plex pattern of formal reversals echoes the central theme of revenge,
and the film contains overt parodies of other genres: eg the Western
and the Bike movie. *Terminal Island* begins with the stereotype of
the aggressive positive woman; in the progress of the narrative the
protagonists fight to establish a Utopian society, initiated by the
women, and the narrative closes with the stereotype of woman as
mother presiding over their Utopia.

Any argument about the differences between Rothman's films
and other films in the exploitation field must ultimately be sorted
out by close analysis of the films themselves. Nevertheless, her
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work on the forms of the exploitation genres to produce contradic-
tions, shifts in meaning which disturb the patriarchal myths of
women on which the exploitation film itself rests. It is this strategy
of displacement, of struggle within the forms of the film, which is
of vital use to us in our struggle to find our own language, rather
than the attempt to express our oppression in a coherent feminist
metalanguage.

PAM COOK

The SEFT Weekend Schools

Having entered a second year, the SEFT weekend schools seem to
have become an established and regularised quarterly event, and
the appearance in April of a programme planned till December
seems to indicate a growing commitment among the organisers to
the schools as an institution. This commitment is entirely welcome
since the schools are a Good Thing, but it may be useful to reflect
on the story so far, as a way of focussing some of the difficulties
which have already been recognised, and in the hope that con-
tinuing analysis of form and function will prevent the schools
from going the way of other institutionalised Good Things. Criti-
cism may be made redundant by the series to come, but it seems
appropriate now, particularly since the last school, on teaching
The Searchers, brought together a number of difficulties and
confronted a number of criticisms which had previously been made.

Inevitably, the central questions seem to concern function and
audience: what are the schools for, and who are they for? The
comforting response to such questions is that the schools are a
contribution to the development of a film culture within the specific
context of the *Screen/Screen Education* project, but while this is
an acceptable general formulation, there is also the feeling that the

against each other has the effect of parodying those styles and the accompanying stereotypes. The inclusion of an abortion scene also introduces a jarring note into the film. In *Terminal Island* a complex pattern of formal reversals echoes the central theme of revenge, and the film contains overt parodies of other genres: eg the Western and the Bike movie. *Terminal Island* begins with the stereotype of the aggressive positive woman; in the progress of the narrative the protagonists fight to establish a Utopian society, initiated by the women, and the narrative closes with the stereotype of woman as mother presiding over their Utopia.

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Inevitably, the central questions seem to concern function and audience: what are the schools for, and who are they for? The comforting response to such questions is that the schools are a contribution to the development of a film culture within the specific context of the *Screen/Screen Education* project, but while this is an acceptable general formulation, there is also the feeling that the

reference to education buried within SEFT's initials is a specific reference. The responsibility of *Screen Education* here is explicit, and the weekend schools seem, in part, to be an acceptance of this responsibility. There is the sense at the schools that there ought to be a concern with the problems of film-teaching, but there has always been a difficulty in determining how this concern should be expressed, and at what level. At each plenary session the criticism is made that educational problems were not foregrounded, but in each seminar the most articulate group (dominant because it forms a mutual support system of weekend-school regulars) tends to be more concerned with the problems of film theory than with those of film-teaching practice. The school on teaching *The Searchers* seemed to set out to confront this difficulty, but got into trouble through the absence of presentations on fundamental issues, which simply meant that theoretical assumptions were left lying around to be tripped over in seminars when it was discovered that they were not after all shared, and the same criticism was again made at the plenary session. The difficulty seems to me to be somewhat illusory, concerned with expectations, and even, perhaps, with the guilt of the organisers, rather than with real problems of theory and practice. However, since *Screen Education* is concerned with problems of film teaching, and since the weekend schools have come to be identified with *Screen Education*, the expectation is there that the weekend schools will be concerned with film teaching. Two points are worth making. The first is that it quickly becomes apparent that a weekend school, particularly one where the proportion of teachers to non-teachers may be relatively small, is not an effective location for discussion of the problems of class-room practice. The second is that film theory *is* a fundamental problem of film-teaching practice. The educational project of the weekend schools can legitimately be to clarify what is being taught, the theoretical material rather than the specifics of the teaching situation, and while this may seem implicitly obvious, it is also important that it be made explicit.

There are dangers in this too, some of which may be undervalued by those of us whose immediate problem is not class-room practice. The principal danger is that the weekend schools will lose all commitment to actual educational practice and shade off into seminars of advanced theory. This is where the precise educational responsibility of *Screen* becomes an issue, and where it becomes essential that the schools become SEFT events rather than an either/or oscillation of *Screen* and *Screen Education*. *Screen* is continually under attack for its failures of communication, and its habitual defence has been to recognise and re-state mediation as a problem: how to advance and disseminate a radical and progressive body of knowledge about film, at the same time as protecting it from appropriation and simplification by bourgeois criticism. The difficulty, as Colin MacCabe acknowledged in an earlier article

under the Film Culture rubric, is to distinguish the philistine
hysteria from the real problem (*Screen* v 16 n 1, Spring 1975). A
further difficulty, however, which is less acknowledged, is that the
continual posing and reposing of mediation as a problem simply
institutionalises it within theory and naturalises it within *Screen*.
The weekend schools seem to offer a structure in which the prob-
lem can be usefully confronted in practice, and the relatively low
profile of *Screen* (as a corporate identity) at the schools not only
limits the discussion in fruitful areas, but also puts in question
Screen's commitment to tackling its acknowledged problems. The
presence in the programme for the new series of a school on
realism organised by the Editorial Board of *Screen*, is therefore to
be welcomed on a number of levels.

But this does not remove the danger of seminars of advanced
theory. My concern here is not a reactionary suspicion of the theory,
but a suspicion that the appropriation of the weekend schools by
advanced theory would be as reactionary *in effect* as appropriation
by philistine simplification. It would simply be an inappropriate use
of the context which has been established. The point is that there
is obviously a need for seminars of advanced theory (the existence
of *Screen* reading groups in various parts of the country demon-
strates this need), just as there is a need for discussion of class-
room practice, but the project of the weekend schools is best
directed, not towards satisfying either of these needs, but towards
mediating between the two, establishing the theory in, and as,
practice.

In this respect, the weekend devoted to mise-en-scène might
serve as a model, not because of its content, which was relatively
slight, but because its structure allowed an established approach,
more or less the *Movie* approach, represented by Michael Walker
and Victor Perkins, to be confronted with a (more or less) struc-
turalist/semiotic approach, represented by Jim Cook and Ben
Brewster. This is obviously a simplification of what actually hap-
pened, but as a model it allowed basic premisses, the material
of the week-end, to be established, then complicated and extended.
In effect, it may have meant that the distance one could travel was
limited, but at least it was travelled together, carrying the same
luggage and reading the same maps. The assumptions could be
criticised because they were made explicit, and they could be
challenged, extended, or re-articulated by confrontation with pro-
gressive theory. The trouble with the school on *The Searchers* was,
firstly, that in trying to get to discussion of class-room practice
the theory was assumed as a given, and, somehow, a shared given,
and, secondly, the given theories were not confronted with an alter-
native. Had Geoffrey Nowell-Smith's interesting critique of *Screen
Education* 17, on *The Searchers* (*Screen* v 17 n 1, Spring 1976),
been presented as a paper at the school devoted to that issue the
weekend would have been more productive, and the article would

have been set in a context. The contention is that weekend schools, unlike *Screen* reading groups, if they are to be genuinely educational, cannot assume a predisposition on the part of the audience, but have to argue through the basic theory towards a more progressive position.

It is not necessary to raise here many of the problems of organisation and format which are discussed at plenary sessions, but it is worth mentioning the one controversial aspect of format which does seem to bear on the nature of the schools as a means of mediation: the ' presentation-versus-seminar ' issue. The practice has tended to be that films are shown, presentations are made, and the two are brought together in group seminars. It is hardly a radical practice and it has limitations. Potentially, it might be more useful to have general discussions prior to seminars, but this has not always worked. The proposal that presentations should be abandoned as educationally ineffective, however, seems to me to be itself educationally unsound, and runs counter to the model I have been proposing which depends on all the assumptions being made explicit within the school. While the work of the school may be focussed in the seminars, the presentations define the material on which the work is to be done, and without this definition, as became clear in *The Searchers* weekend, time is wasted in seminars chasing after each other's premises.

The usefulness of the weekend schools seems hardly an issue. The difficulty, in fact, at least from the isolation of the regions, is in formulating a critical attitude and thinking of them as being other than simply Good and Unproblematic Things, providing an opportunity for critical dialogue between Old Compton Street, Dean Street, and the rest of the world. It is, however, important that the precise terms and function of the dialogue be continually brought back into question, and that the context which is now established be progressively and appropriately developed as a site of both intervention and mediation.

JOHN CAUGHIE

Dear Editors,

Just a short note apropos your last issue. Ben Brewster in his editorial wrote ' Different uses of the key terms in these discussions reveal two broad trends in film-making which opposes the narrative-representational tradition: a " modernist " current which expels meaning in the interests of the purely filmic, and a political current which exposes the processes of signification to denaturalise ideology '. He should have put quotation marks around both ' political ' and ' modernist ', or around neither. Also, the notion of the ' purely filmic ' is a mystification.

Of the two broad trends he (and Peter Wollen) speak of, it is precisely the ' modernist ' one which exposes processes of signification to denaturalise ideology. Merely superimposing some formal devices (' deconstructions ' or not) over a ' political ' subject matter is not the answer.

As to Peter Wollen's piece, ' " Ontology " and " Materialism " in Film ': to state that ' any post-Brechtian sense of materialism (must) be concerned with the significance of what is represented, itself located in the material world and in history ' is to hark back to notions of given significance, found when searched for, true reality as merely exhumed. It is to see, for example, in Straub/ Huillet's *History Lessons*, in the car scenes, ' reality as it is ', reality as given not constructed, not as ideological (on, through, by, and for, etc). This is far from work on the signifier. The route of significance is the route of the pregiven, which is the route of subjective interpretation of necessity felt to be correct by *each* interpretor. It is an ideological route that is issueless, as far as film is concerned. When the significance shines through (located ' in history ' or not) we are back in the Radek/Lukács camp.

Wollen's thesis is too simplifying of the work being done (' Gidal foregrounds focussing, Le Grice foregrounds projection-procedure, etc '). Wollen's attempt to set up a single-line hierarchy (in the guise of bridges) *from* the complexities of Godard (etc) *to* the (simple) foregrounders of this or that aspect, keeps the notions of film practice as previously acknowledged intact, with a bit of reformism at one end.

Experimental work is being done, in the most extreme form of

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course doesn't stop one from knowing, eg that *duration* is non-
existent as finite event in a painting; it exists in film. An ontology
is not what is being expounded. Nor ' an " anti-ontology " for a
medium which is " illusionist " by nature '. Whose nature?.

The Brecht vogue, by the way, seems to be serving a retrograde
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between his texts on theatre and his theatre-and-film-texts. Peter
Wollen hints at a recognition of this problematic elsewhere when
he writes: ' A work, therefore, which recognised the primacy of
the signifier in the process of signification. This would not involve
the reduction of the signifier purely to the material substrate, a
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stream*, a continuum of signifieds, *by the de-mystificatory break,
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discontinuity within an over-riding continuity* ' (p 19 – italics mine).
The *nor* is to be emphasised.

I hope *Screen* will now begin to investigate in depth specific
films of the avant-garde in Britain, and create a place for real
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Yet while concluding that in general this pattern holds, he admits

that it can be found in full only in the authorship and genre articles
– two out of the six contributions. Elsewhere the fit between his
model and the articles is at best partial.

At the same time he misses my point about causality. A central
argument of the introduction to my article (*Screen Education* 17,
p 35) is that emphasis on the determinants of production is mis-
leading, tending to imply a model of causality that is vastly over-
simplified, partly because it ignores wider (more difficult to define)
social determinants, and partly because it fails to take account of
the communication process:

' We tend to give priority to production over other parts of
industrial process. I suspect this priority has to do with the desire
to locate production circumstances which can be seen to have had
a direct effect on the finished film. . . . Understandable as the desire
is, it suggests a model of determinations which is much too simple
(cause-effect) and which puts disproportionate emphasis on
production . . . processes of determination contributing to a
product, the final point of those processes, an object whose status
seems largely unproblematic. But, as a study of the post-production
materials on *The Searchers* suggests, a wider sense of deter-
minations is needed, one which goes beyond what we normally
think of as " the finished film " to embrace the determinants,
equally bound up with the industry, contributing to how the film
is received – an attempt to understand the range of attitudes that
underlie how the film was advertised and reviewed – in the
broadest sense, how it was seen. . . . This is not to embrace extreme
relativism – each individual's predispositions creating a different
film – but to suggest that audience predispositions are part of the
communication process: the emphasis on production balanced by
an equal stress on production *of meanings* '.

This distinction seems to me parallel to that made by Nowell-Smith
as the major point of his review (p 32):

' There is . . . no a priori reason why the performance of the
assemblage (ie the production of the film) . . . should directly
correspond to the values of the product in use. Nor need the
product, entering the sphere of circulation, be required to be the
same object-in-use for all possible consumers. The essays on *The
Searchers* do not explicitly make use of this analogy between film
as commodity production and film as communicative system '.

It seems less than generous to fail to acknowledge the not dis-
similar distinction that I made.

Earlier (p 27) Nowell-Smith comments on what he sees as basic
uncertainties about the aims of *The Searchers* issue:

' The first uncertainty is over the conflicting claims of scholarship
and pedagogy. A lot of space is devoted to the question of

VistaVision, and frame stills are even reproduced in that ratio. Since most students will be seeing the film in a 16mm print cropped to standard (4:3) ratio, they are perhaps owed a word of explanation.'

Conflicting impulses *can* be identified in the issue at a number of levels (I imagine all the contributors were aware of them); they were perhaps inherent in the ambition of the scheme overall. In my own case the problems of presenting teaching approaches on the industry became increasingly clear as the research proceeded, and resulted in the slightly uncomfortable compromise of the article as published: constraints of space meant that two-thirds of the material collected had to be omitted. This is in no way a criticism of the editors; in the event, if the issue was to appear, the cuts had to be made and were jointly agreed. But on the whole the conflicts generated by the exercise (not just my own experience) seem to me positive and informative rather than negative and mystifying.

But that apart, Nowell-Smith's choice of illustration is unfortunate: he is quite simply wrong about VistaVision. Much of the technical data in my technology section was omitted in publication. If it had appeared Nowell-Smith would have realised' that there was no single VistaVision ratio – the process's major appeal to exhibitors (in contrast to Cinemascope and other anamorphic processes) was its flexibility: it could be projected in aspect ratios from 1:1.33 (Standard) to 1:1.85, from a *standard* 35 mm frame, and up to 1:2 using a 'squeezed' 35 mm print and a special VistaVision anamorphic lens (not compatible with Cinemascope). To achieve the flexibility from standard prints VistaVision cameras had a hairline framing in the viewfinder, marking the aspect ratio of 1:1.66, which cameramen were instructed to keep within. This meant that nothing important could be photographed outside that line and in projection some ratios would give more clearance to the central part of the image than others. Paramount's claim was that a picture composed in such a way would play with maximum effect at 1:1.85, but would lose nothing (apart from a little height) up to 1:2. Standard release prints carried a framing index (marks on the upper right hand corner of the frame) enabling projectionists to frame correctly at four different aspect ratios. The varied ratios were achieved not on the frame, but *in projection*, using different ratio aperture plates and lenses of a focal length which would fill the particular cinema screen.

The frame stills in *Screen Education* are obviously not in 'the VistaVision ratio' (there wasn't one) – they were (presumably) enlarged from images taken from the movie on to 35 mm still film which is exposed horizontally in the camera in a larger frame size than the vertically exposed movie film (not unlike the *photography* of VistaVision). I imagine their ratio derives from that.

As to the word of explanation, Nowell-Smith will perhaps accept this as the one properly due. Students watching the 16 mm print would not be deceived. The important point about VistaVision in teaching the industry is that in different cinemas *The Searchers* would have had quite different aspect ratios; a point almost impossible to illustrate in the classroom but one that is valuable to grasp.

Yours sincerely,
DOUGLAS PYE

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith writes:
I am grateful to Douglas Pye for calling attention to an error in my article reviewing Screen Education *17. As he points out, Vista-Vision was not a ratio but a process, and one which allowed for projection in various ratios. But it seems to me that, in his zeal to set me right, he comes perilously close to denying that VistaVision was a wide-screen process at all. It may be agreed that the technical specificity of VistaVision consisted mainly in its larger negative, which permitted higher definition and so a larger image. It may be agreed too that there was room for variation in the ratio in which the image would be projected. But, on the basis of Pye's own evidence, and in terms of his own explicit methodology, it must surely also be recognised that the nature of the VistaVision process was not determined by its technical specificity alone, but by the overall context into which it was inserted. And in this context a larger image almost always meant, first and foremost, a wider image. This is what the companies were offering, what the exhibitors were in a position to supply, and what the public thought it was getting. There may have been some exhibitors who expanded their total screen area in both directions, and others who could not expand it at all, but in the vast majority of cases VistaVision entered into theatrical circulation stamped as a form of widescreen process and projected in some ratio wider than Academy (though usually narrower than 'Scope). This did not happen in non-theatrical conditions, where most projection is in 16mm and few projectors are equipped with a range of aperture plates. Unless the film is masked on the print (or alternatively squeezed for anamorphic projection) most 16mm audiences will therefore see VistaVision films in a ratio (and with a print quality) very different from that, or those, which characterised the process when it first appeared. That was, and remains, the essence of my point.*
Finally I should say that, although I ought perhaps to have taken more care to differentiate the various contributions to Screen Education *17, I would not accept the notion of a parallelism between Pye's model of causality and my own. Although there are*

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136 *some similarities between them in terms of the data we each feel it necessary to take into account, these similarities conceal theoretical divergences greater, in my opinion, than those between me and other contributors to the magazine. What Pye is calling for is an expansion of explanatory models to include other ' determinants' than those whose finality is expressed in the making of a product. But what he suggests is basically an additional series of contributing causes that differ from the ones that are effective on production only in the sense of coming after them. This seems to me a thoroughly empiricist procedure, shading into phenomenology at the point at which the subjective aspect of communication is invoked, whereas I was (I hope) talking in quite other terms. The principal disagreement between us here would be over what is meant by ' determination', but also ' production'. For me, in the last analysis, the concept of production is determined by its relation to exchange, and other things follow from there. This is quite different from trying to assess the relative importance of ' production', ' post-production' and other ' social determinants' in a process that is left happily amorphous.*

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